

**SHOTGUNS**  
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**LUNKERS**  
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TEXAS ROAD TRIPS

**VENISON**  
KILLER NACHOS  
FOR THE BIG GAME

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
**HURRICANE**  
**SANDY'S WRATH**  
**AND THE REBOUND**  
**OF A FISHING**  
**COMMUNITY**

P. 22



# FIELD & STREAM

## GREAT STORIES

THE GOAL OF THE  
TOTAL OUTDOORMAN  
FEBRUARY 2013

GIANT BUCKS › MAULING GRIZZLIES › HOB0 HUNTS › EPIC FISH MISADVENTURES & MORE  
18 AWESOME TALES OF PAIN, REDEMPTION, AND GRATITUDE



*Straight From the Field*  
F&S writers and photographers  
share their wildest experiences

THIS ISSUE IS VIDEO-  
ENHANCED. SEE P. 10

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FEBRUARY 2013



*Strong Like Bear* •  
Chris Ott survived a grizzly  
bear mauling in Canada.

## 46 GREAT STORIES

Find a comfortable chair—and maybe fix yourself a drink while you're at it—because this is an issue you'll want to sit down with and enjoy. We gathered a wild collection of 18 never-before-told hunting and fishing tales from FIELD & STREAM's team of writers and photographers, including:

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## FROM THE EDITOR

F&S

# Listen Up

EVERY SPORTSMAN HAS A FEW GOOD STORIES, BUT IT'S HOW YOU TELL THEM THAT CAN TURN THEM INTO CLASSICS

H

UNTERS AND FISHERMEN love a good story. Around a campfire, at the range, or in the corner at a cocktail party—put a couple of us together anywhere and it won't take long before we're swapping tales.

This month we've turned most of the magazine over to that idea ("Great Stories," p. 46), asking our best writers and photographers to share with you the adventures that they tell most often.

These professionals get paid to spin a yarn, but one of the cool things about storytelling is that it's democratic. Everybody has a story, and if you spend enough time in the outdoors, you'll end up with a quiver of good ones.

Traveling to sporting camps around the world, I've heard some great stories from all kinds of people: gregarious raconteurs, laconic ranch hands, quiet and humble guides. Every speaker has his or her own style and every story its own personality, but I have learned a few things from listening to the great ones.

**Take your time.** Don't rush through your story, spilling it out so that it all runs together. Pause at the important parts, have a sip of your drink, and let your audience absorb what they're hearing. As long as it's worth telling, a measured pace will actually help them stick with you.

**Leave out the boring stuff.** Taking your time does not mean including every mundane detail. You got up early and drove down in your truck, or wait, were you in the car that day? Who cares? Leave out everything that is not essential to the story.

**Don't lie.** If you think you can get away with adding another inch to the fish, well, I won't judge you. But be careful, because as soon as your audience gets a whiff of b.s., they stop listening. All your stories will become suspect, and you'll start to notice eye rolls whenever you open your mouth.

**Be a good listener.** Storytelling is a group activity, not a one-man show. You'll get your chance, so don't interrupt someone else's tale or jump in with your own the instant they finish. Not only do you not want to be that guy, but listening to others is how you get to be a good storyteller. Some of my best stories are ones I heard from someone else.

**Finally, go ahead and tell it again.**

That's how you perfect it, and that's how stories make the leap from tale to tradition. It just wouldn't be fish camp without hearing my dad tell the one about the huge brown he muscled out from underneath the logjam. I've heard it so many times I can feel the heavy thrum of the fish through the rod, even though he hooked the trout before I was born. That is the magic of a good story.

*Anthony Licata*

Anthony Licata, Editor-in-Chief  
anthony.licata@bonniercorp.com

## CONTRIBUTORS



**Donald M. Jones** In his 20th year of contributing to F&S, Jones ("Rush," p. 65) has just wrapped up his busiest season, which included 18 days of photographing whitetails and put 40,000 miles on his new 4x4. "I don't have a poker night, I have work and family," he says. "My proudest achievements are my 26-year marriage and more than 650 magazine covers to date."



**Scott Bestul** Every deer hunter has a buck that haunts him ("Regret," p. 48), but our Whitetails field editor Scott Bestul also has many successes: He has shot 22 bucks over 125 inches. "I take the same obsessive-compulsive personality that helped me as a distance runner in college and apply it to deer hunting," says Bestul. "But it's less painful."



F&S

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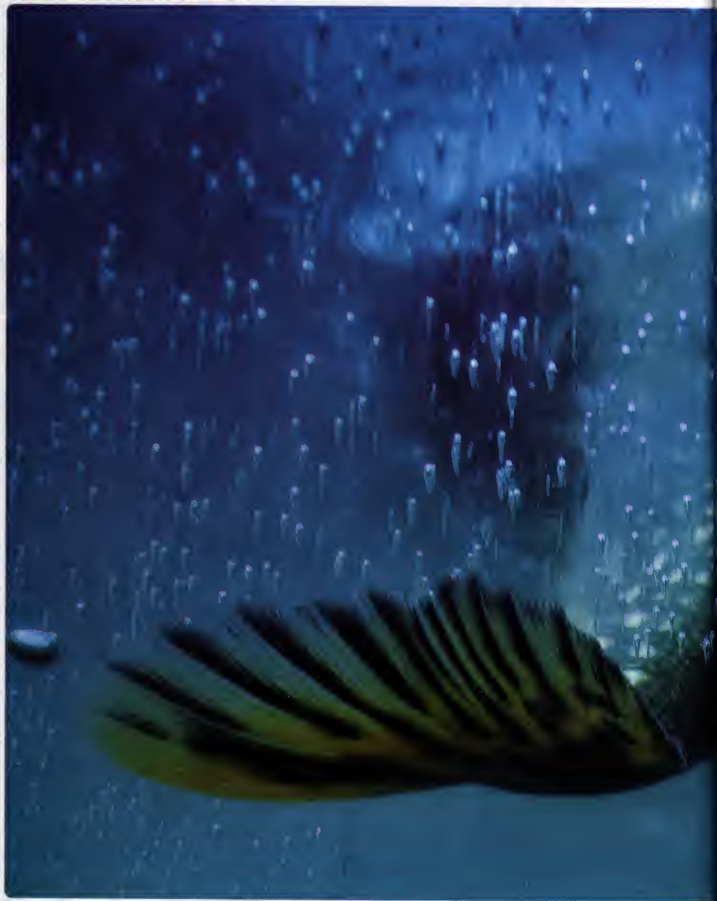
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## ESOX UNDER ICE

Brett Seng pulled this 26-inch northern pike, which had taken a live shiner, through a hole on frozen Fort Peck Reservoir last January as photographer Brian Grossenbacher snapped this shot from an adjacent hole in the ice. "I drilled six holes to create one large enough to allow my camera through in its underwater housing," says Grossenbacher. "I was wearing some heavy-duty insulated rubber gloves that cinch at the wrist, like they use on *Deadliest Catch*, but as soon as I put my hands underwater, they started to leak. I was able to stand the cold long enough to take a few shots of this fish." The conditions were just right for the photo. "The ice wasn't too thick for the light to come through, so you can see all the bubbles suspended in the frozen surface layer. It looks like Mexican glass," Grossenbacher says. "And the fishing was good—we were running from tip-up to tip-up all day, and we caught a 39-inch pike that I was pretty psyched about."

—KRISTYN BRADY



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# CHEERS & JEERS

HEAVY HOMAGE, HEAD-SHOT SHOTS, SOLO ROOSTERS, DON'T PASS THE PORK, AND A TWEET FROM THE DEER WOODS



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keeping me  
updated on the  
latest tech-  
niques and best  
gear. I always  
look forward to  
getting my next  
issue of F&S.”

—Caleb  
Schmeling,  
via e-mail

## SUPERSIZED SECRET

Bill Heavey's accolades to the West in general and Wyoming in particular in "Our Little Secret" (A Sportsman's Life, Nov. 2012) has us standing a bit taller. Yes, ours is bigger! Eye-popping vistas, magnificent wild creatures, and lots of wide open terrain attract and impress all who visit here, and native Wyomingites are fortunate to experience that year-round.

You must reside here for 365 days to earn the coveted resident hunting and fishing license—but these are life-changing documents for transplanted fur, feather, and fin enthusiasts. Thanks, Bill,

for your homage to the land we all love.

Frank R. Baner, Powell, Wyo.

## HEADS OR (BLOOD) TRAILS

I can relate to several incidents David E. Petzal describes in "Hit or Miss?" (Rifles). When I shot a deer at 120 yards in the Carson National Forest in New Mexico, I was sure I connected. The deer went down, then got right back up and ran off. There was no blood trail, so I followed the path it had run but lost it in a rocky area. I circled back and finally found the deer less than 200 yards from where I shot it. It would have been easy to assume that I'd missed it, since blood would have been easy to find in the rocky area.

Bruce E. Spurgeon,  
Cartlake, Pa.

I want to commend Petzal for his great advice, which allowed me to bag a wall-hanger 10-point after three years of hunting Kansas whittails. I knew I'd hit him at 150 yards, but he sure looked healthy when he ran off. After a long search, doubt set in, but I didn't give up until I found him. I whooped and jumped around like it was Christmas morning, then gave thanks.

Maj. Daniel Sessions,  
U.S. Army,  
Fort Riley, Kan.

I am a full-blooded Tlingit Indian from Alaska. We have been hunting deer with firearms since Russians introduced the first trade muskets, and in more than 40 years of hunting, I have personally taken over 100 deer, all with head or neck shots. I was taught this is the quickest, most ethical way to kill an animal for food.

A deer that runs off after being shot may be claimed by a bear before you can find it, or it may never be found. Also, smoked deer ribs are much nicer without bullet holes in them. Petzal is entitled to his opinion about taking head shots, but he shouldn't be surprised when not everyone shares it.

William F. Peters,  
Sitka, Alaska

I see nothing wrong with a drop-it-in-its-tracks, gut-it-where-it-falls, meat-in-the-freezer head shot. Sure beats crawling through the laurel and briars, day or night, looking for

blood spatter. Keep on looking while I'm eating deer meat.

Christopher H. White,  
via e-mail

**DAVID E. PETZAL RESPONDS:** *The objection I have to head shots is simple: It's all too easy to shoot the jaw off an animal, which will then go on to die a death that does not bear thinking about. A friend of mine did just that to an elk, spent three days looking for it, and never found it. The shot haunted him to his dying day.*

## FLOAT AND TELL

Far be it for me to complain about a picture of a big fish, but I have to quibble over the photo of a saltwater striper caught by kayaker Tony Sponzo in "Game Faces" (Campfire). The gentleman is obviously a great fisherman, but he should be wearing a good snug PFD and quick-dry synthetic materials instead of what appears to be a cotton T-shirt and jeans. If that bruiser had executed a sudden surge under the boat and jerked him off balance, it would have been a recipe for disaster. We kayak fishermen are all just a second away from a swim, so make sure you get to go home and tell the tale.

Herschel Finch,  
Front Royal, Va.

## PHEASANT SCHOOL DEBATE

As I was checking my score on "The Pheasant Exam," I was surprised to see that one of the answers offered no actual tip for dogless pheasant hunters except that they should get a bird dog. I

am unable to invest hundreds of dollars and hours upon hours training a bird dog, and I was offended that you would tell me, basically, *don't bother until you do*. The pheasants in Iowa are scarce, but I still manage to shoot five or six birds a year, and it's not due to the work of a dog. I invest in my own preparation and skill.

Andrew Haynes, Treynor, Iowa

**PHIL BOURJAILY RESPONDS:** Sorry to offend you. I grew up as a dogless pheasant hunter, too, walking up birds on our family farm. Actually all of the "wrong" answers to that question are good advice for the dogless hunter: Walk and pause, especially in corners and field edges and as you get to the end of pieces of cover. Hunt strips such as ditches, waterways, and fencerows where birds can't run around you. Work with a partner to post and drive so birds can't run out the end of a piece of cover.

#### GUESSTIMATING GAME

The First Shot photo titled "Huff and Bluff" featured a Colorado bull moose that the photographer estimated at 1,400 pounds. Colorado's moose are of the Shiras subspecies, and the live weight of these mature males seldom exceeds 800 pounds. The bull in the photo has antlers typical of a bull just shy of maturity, so two bulls his size might weigh 1,400 pounds—just one would not.

Vic Van Ballenberghe,  
Anchorage, Alaska

#### MORE DOGS!

I raise field-competition gun-dog beagles, I'm very happy to see more articles on hunting dogs, like Phil Bourjaily's "Gun-Dog Tech" (Shotguns). He did a great job on an informative article.

Mike Franklin, via e-mail

#### MORE HOGS!

I really enjoyed Will Brantley's hog hunting tips in "Hog Wild" (Sportsman's Notebook). I learned a few things, too. It seems like you only run one article a year on the subject, and I would love to see more coverage.

Chandler Vanlandingham,  
via e-mail

*We hear you. Expect more stories on both in future issues.*

—THE EDITORS

## BEST DAY BUCKS

*@FieldandStream, thanks to you guys and your #rut issue, I killed my first buck with a bow.*

—martier23, via Twitter



AFTER READING "The Best Days of the Rut 2012," I convinced my dad I had to take off work on Nov. 10. My morning stand yielded nothing and I let a small buck pass by around 2 P.M., then the woods finally exploded. The biggest buck I'd ever seen in that area followed four does past my stand, and half an hour later I stood over this giant, whose rack measured 20 inches wide. This buck will hopefully end up mounted right between my dad's two trophies.

Dillon Matthews,  
Sussex County, Va.

WHEN I READ about your Best Day of the Rut in the dentist's waiting room, I told my kids that was the day we'd be out there—all day! My youngest, Caden, had dibs on the blind and took his second buck in two years.

Cindy Baskin, Colville, Wash.

THAT MORNING, when my buck showed up, I only waited to be sure he was legal. Then I shot him.

Caden Baskin, age 10

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### WHAT IS CRESTOR?

CRESTOR is a prescription medicine that belongs to a group of cholesterol-lowering medicines called statins. Along with diet, CRESTOR lowers "bad" cholesterol (LDL-C) and increases "good" cholesterol (HDL-C). If bad cholesterol levels are left untreated, fatty deposits (plaque) can build up in the walls of the blood vessels. This plaque buildup, over time, can lead to narrowing of these vessels. This is one of the most common causes of heart disease. By lowering bad cholesterol in your blood, CRESTOR can slow this plaque buildup in the walls of blood vessels.

CRESTOR has been proven to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes in people without known heart disease, but who are at increased risk based on age (men 50 years and older, women 60 years and older), elevated blood levels of hsCRP (a marker of inflammation that can be associated with increased risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attack and stroke), plus at least one additional risk factor (such as high blood pressure, low HDL "good" cholesterol, smoking, or family history of early heart disease).

### WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance, also called a lipid, normally found in your bloodstream. Your body needs a certain amount of cholesterol to function properly. But high cholesterol can lead to health problems. LDL-C is called bad cholesterol because if you have too much in your bloodstream, it can become a danger to your health and can lead to potentially serious conditions. HDL-C is known as good cholesterol because it may help remove excess cholesterol. Common health factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, family history of early heart disease, and age can make controlling your cholesterol even more important.

### WHAT IS ATHEROSCLEROSIS?

Atherosclerosis is the progressive buildup of plaque in the arteries over time. One major cause is high levels of LDL-C. Other health factors, such as family history, diabetes, high blood pressure, or if you smoke or are overweight, may also play a role in the formation of plaque in arteries. Often this plaque starts building up in arteries in early adulthood and gets worse over time.

### HOW DOES CRESTOR WORK?

Most of the cholesterol in your blood is made in the liver. CRESTOR works by reducing cholesterol in two ways: CRESTOR blocks an enzyme in the liver causing the liver to make less cholesterol, and CRESTOR increases the uptake and breakdown by the liver of cholesterol already in the blood.

### WHO SHOULD NOT TAKE CRESTOR?

Do not take CRESTOR if you

- are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, or are planning to become pregnant. CRESTOR may harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant, stop taking CRESTOR and call your health care professional right away
- are breast-feeding. CRESTOR can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby
- have liver problems
- have had an allergic reaction to CRESTOR or are allergic to any of its ingredients.

The active ingredient is rosuvastatin calcium. The inactive ingredients are microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate, tribasic calcium phosphate, croscarmellose,

(continued)

magnesium stearate, hypromellose, triacetin, titanium dioxide, yellow ferric oxide, and red ferric oxide. The safety and effectiveness of CRESTOR have not been established in children under the age of 10.

### HOW SHOULD I TAKE CRESTOR?

- Take CRESTOR exactly as prescribed by your health care professional. Do not change your dose or stop CRESTOR without talking to your health care professional, even if you are feeling well
- Your health care professional may do blood tests to check your cholesterol levels before and during your treatment with CRESTOR. Your dose of CRESTOR may be changed based on these blood test results
- CRESTOR can be taken at any time of day, with or without food
- Swallow the tablets whole
- Your health care professional should start you on a cholesterol-lowering diet before giving you CRESTOR. Stay on this diet when you take CRESTOR
- Wait at least 2 hours after taking CRESTOR to take an antacid that contains a combination of aluminum and magnesium hydroxide
- If you miss a dose of CRESTOR, take it as soon as you remember. However, do not take 2 doses of CRESTOR within 12 hours of each other
- If you take too much CRESTOR or overdose, call your health care professional or Poison Control Center right away, or go to the nearest emergency room

### WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL BEFORE TAKING CRESTOR?

Tell your health care professional if you

- have a history of muscle pain or weakness
- are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, or are planning to become pregnant
- are breast-feeding
- drink more than 2 glasses of alcohol daily
- have liver problems
- have kidney problems
- have thyroid problems
- are Asian or of Asian descent

Tell your health care professional about all medicines you take or plan to take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines may interact with CRESTOR, causing side effects. It is particularly important to tell your health care professional if you are taking or plan to take medicines for

- your immune system
- cholesterol/triglycerides
- blood thinning
- HIV/AIDS
- preventing pregnancy

Know all of the medicines you take and what they look like. It's always a good idea to check that you have the right prescription before you leave the pharmacy and before you take any medicine. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your health care professional.

If you need to go to the hospital or have surgery, tell all of your health care professionals about all medicines that you are taking.

### WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CRESTOR?

CRESTOR can cause side effects in some people.

Serious side effects may include:

- Muscle problems.** Call your health care professional right away if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, especially with fever. This may be an early sign of a rare muscle problem that could lead to serious kidney problems. The risk of muscle problems is greater in people who are 65 years of age or older, or who already have thyroid or kidney problems. The chance of muscle problems may be increased if you are taking certain other medicines with CRESTOR.
- If you have muscle problems that do not go away even after your health care professional has advised you to stop taking CRESTOR, notify your health care professional. Your health care professional may do further tests to diagnose the cause of your muscle problems.
- Liver problems.** Your health care professional should do blood tests to check your liver before you start taking CRESTOR and if you have symptoms of liver problems while you take CRESTOR. Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following symptoms of liver problems:
  - feel unusually tired or weak
  - loss of appetite
  - upper belly pain
  - dark urine
  - yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes

Elevated blood sugar levels have been reported with statins, including CRESTOR.

The most common side effects may include headache, muscle aches and pains, abdominal pain, weakness, and nausea. Memory loss and confusion have also been reported with CRESTOR.

This is not a complete list of side effects of CRESTOR.

Talk to your health care professional for a complete list or if you have side effects that bother you or that do not go away.

### HOW DO I STORE CRESTOR?

Store CRESTOR at room temperature, 68-77°F (20-25°C), in a dry place. If your health care professional tells you to stop treatment or if your medicine is out of date, throw the medicine away. **Keep CRESTOR and all medicines in a secure place and out of the reach of children.**

### WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CRESTOR?

Talk to your health care professional. Full Prescribing Information is available on CRESTOR.COM or by calling 1-800-CRESTOR.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

It is important to take CRESTOR as prescribed and to discuss any health changes you experience while taking CRESTOR with your health care professional. Do not use CRESTOR for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give CRESTOR to other people, even if they have the same medical condition you have. It may harm them. **NOTE:** This summary provides important information about CRESTOR. For more information, please ask your health care professional about the full Prescribing Information and discuss it with him or her.

Visit **CRESTOR.COM** or call the Information Center at AstraZeneca toll-free at 1-800-CRESTOR.

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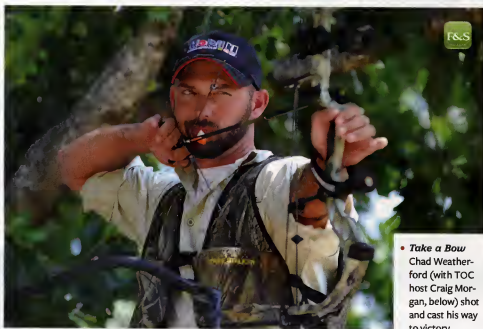
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## THE TOTAL OUTDOORSMAN CHALLENGE

## HOW I WON (AGAIN)

South Carolina sportsman Chad Weatherford won the 2012 TOC—his second title. Here, he talks about the pressure, the skills, and the sweet taste of victory **INTERVIEW BY COLIN KEARNS**



• **Take a Bow**  
Chad Weatherford (with TOC host Craig Morgan, below) shot and cast his way to victory.

**T**O BE A TOTAL Outdoorsman takes years of experience in the wild, learning how to adapt in any situation and enjoying even the bad days. You have to get rained on. You have to get stuck in the mud. Learn how to take the good with the bad, and you'll learn something new every time out.

The smallmouth event was my favorite this year. It was the first time I'd ever fished for them. I've already talked to one of the other competitors about fishing for them this spring.

This year's new format of the TOC was great, but it was hard to watch a competitor go home after each head-to-head matchup. There were so many good guys I wish could've stayed there longer.

I enjoy competing against friends. It relaxes me. Before the competition ever started, Tom Boatwright [two-time TOC champ] and I hoped we'd make it to the finals. That way, we'd know one of us would take it home again.

The wind was really strong on the archery course, which made it tough. When I shoot in the wind, I hold the bow and wait for that short moment when the wind lays

down to squeeze off a shot. And pray.

On the morning of the finals, Tom and I rode out to the course together. We said we knew we'd at least be guaranteed second place, and I told him I'd be happy with however things turned out and that I was just going to enjoy myself and have fun. And I did.

When I fired my last shot, I knew I'd won.

The \$50,000 in prizes? My wife and I will be using that for the baby girl we have on the way.

I am the Total Outdoorsman—at least for another year!

→ For details on how to enter the 2013 TOC, visit [totaloutdoorsmanchallenge.com](http://totaloutdoorsmanchallenge.com)



## READER TIPS



## Set Your Cam by Laser

Struggling to point your trail cam at the right spot in the vast undergrowth? Shine a dollar-store laser pointer from the center of the camera lens so its light falls on the area to be filmed. Adjust the angle of the unit as desired until you've set up the perfect shot.

Cordon Davis,  
West | [facebook.com/cordondavis](http://facebook.com/cordondavis)

## Pick-Up Stick

Moving around a cramped duck blind in full waterfowl gear is never easy. Bring along a mechanic's plunger-type retrieval tool and use it to pick up dropped items like gloves, sunglasses, and empty shells.

Mark Cascerotto,  
Redwood City, Calif.

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*Grays Matter* •  
Squirrels deliver exciting and nostalgic hunts—not to mention great table fare.

# CAMPFIRE

## END GAME

A late-winter squirrel hunt reveals the best moments of the year—and kicks off a new season full with potential

By T. Edward Nickens



**T**HE SHADOW is a dead giveaway. It's no more than a dark lump, moving along the shadow of a big red oak draped across the ground like a fallen log. I can't help but grin. This time of year, you rarely see an entire squirrel, and I've learned to look for little pieces that point to the whole: a wisp of tail in a tree crotch, a bump on a log. And I couldn't count the number of squirrels I've tumbled when their moving shadows caught my eye. It can happen anytime in the squirrel woods, but it happens most often on a day like this, late in winter, when trees are bare and the forests wide open and long tree shadows stripe the ground.

The shadow melts away—the squirrel must have moved to the far side of the tree—and now a slash of blaze orange catches my eye. My 12-year-old son, Jack, is on the move, too. This is the first year I've let him hunt outside my immediate grasp. No longer shoulder to shoulder with me at the base of a big oak, he's making his first solo forays through the woods. I remember my own well: A 100-acre wood was a magical world, and a .22 rifle in hand freighted every step, every moment, with promise. I suspect Jack is feeling all of that, too, although it may take him 30 years to realize it.

#### THE SMALL STUFF

I don't think there's a better way to wind down a hunting season than to spend a few mornings hunting late-winter squirrels. Some of us never lose our taste for chasing tree rats through the hardwoods, but I'm guessing a bunch of us close that chapter as we move on—and up, we tell ourselves—to deer, ducks, elk, or whatever other game seems to suit our grown-up tastes. That's a pity. The occasional squirrel hunt is like riding a bike with no hands or smooching with your wife in public. If you think those days are past, all the more reason to pucker up.

And squirrel hunting in late winter gives gifts we might have overlooked as kids. Void of leaves, the woods lay bare and open. You can see the crumbled brick chimneys of old farm-



• **Season Finale**  
With one squirrel on his belt, a black-powder hunter aims at another.

steads, the pitch and roll of the land, every branch and twig, a rabbit's briery warren, the deer's bed still warm to the touch. You can see the past, too, if you look in the right places.

As I sit quietly, a highlight reel plays through my mind, flickering scenes of the best of the season now coming to a close. From here I can see the open slash of Black Creek, its banks fanged with cypress knees. I shot a 9-point whitetail there earlier in the year, the last of a heart-stopping trio of bucks that plodded along the creek almost nose to tail, like cows headed to milking. The



**"The occasional squirrel hunt is like riding a bike with no hands or smooching your wife in public."**

sleep under my feet runs into Meadow Branch, which spills into the creek a couple of stone's throws to the northwest. Jack and I were skunked there earlier on ducks, then whiffed on a string of Canadas that skirted the treetops. Forgettable shots, yes, but what I won't forget was how Jack nearly fell off his bucket and into the creek with a huge backward-leaning dawn yawn. I can see the clear-cut where the beagles ran rabbits. The greenbrier thicket where I shot the season's first meat doe. All this from my winter perch. All things revealed.

But I can barely see Jack now. He moves in and out of sight, a flicker of orange and tan that appears, then disappears, then reappears again, like the windows on a passing train. He's getting out there. I start to whistle him in, then hold my breath. He knows these woods. It's time for him to stretch his wings,

as well. It's his last hunt of the season. Soon it will be time to store the rifle and break out the fly rods. A month from now there could be hickory shad in the river, and ancient daffodils pushing up around the crumbled brick chimneys.

The shadow sprouts fine gray fur and a tail, and works its way along a fallen log now, just as I'd hoped. I track the animal through the scope, and when he stops, the crosshairs bump with my quickening pulse. I breathe in, then let half a breath go. Funny, but when a squirrel is headed my way, it never feels like small game. **ES**

#### TIP OF THE MONTH REST EASY



Carry a folding saw and this modified PVC T-joint, and you'll never be without a shooting stick for long-range squirrel shots. At home, glue a 4-inch piece of 1/2-inch PVC pipe into the branch of the T-joint (1), and pad it with black foam or camouflage tape (2). In the field, cut an inch-thick sapling about a foot long. Slip the T-joint over the stick (3) so the padded branch juts off to the side—voilà, a mini shooting rail. To aim, grasp the stick and pipe at the proper level, cradle the rifle in the rest, and bring home the good stuff.

—T.E.N.



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SPECIAL REPORT

# REELING FROM THE BLOW

Voices from the Northeast fishing community post-Hurricane Sandy

By Joe Cermelo

**D**URING THE WEEK of Oct. 22, 2012, peanut bunker were pouring out of the bays along the New Jersey and New York coasts, getting smashed by the first big push of fall striped bass in the Atlantic. Massive schools of gigantic bluefish—bigger than most anglers had seen in years—invaded inshore waters. But there was not an angler that week, myself included, who wasn't dwelling on Hurricane Sandy. Making landfall in New Jersey on Oct. 29, the "superstorm" ended up being the most destructive the Northeast has seen in over 100 years.

Sandy caught local anglers off-guard, destroying thousands of homes, boats, marinas, beach access points, and landmark tackle shops in its path. Chris Ze-

man, a New Jersey representative of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, was quick to take action.

"I started compiling e-mails from anglers across affected areas to help get the message across to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration about what was really happening along the New Jersey and New York coasts," Zeman says. "We needed to make sure recreational fishermen were not forgotten in Sandy recovery." Zeman's efforts to raise awareness didn't go unnoticed. By Nov. 13, 2012, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie officially requested that the U.S. Department of Commerce declare a federal fisheries disaster, calling New Jersey's recreational and commercial fishing industry a "defining element of the Jersey Shore and a crucial tourism draw." On Nov. 16, acting secretary of commerce Rebecca Blank did just that, making federal aid available.

Sandy might have cut down the fishing industry during the fall season, but most involved in the sport anticipate being back in the game by spring. Here's what some people who rely on fishing to



"Sandy might have cut down the fishing industry during the fall season, but most involved in the sport anticipate being back in the game by spring."



• **Sandy Blasted** A looter warning (left), an arcade turned donation center, and a flooded home near Belmar, N.J.



F&amp;S

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MARIO TAMM/GETTY IMAGES; JOE CERMELO (4)



**Gouged Out**  
Sandy created a new inlet in Mantoloking, N.J., destroying homes and roads.

THE FISH



## CASTING IN THE AFTERMATH

Did Hurricane Sandy create long-term problems for Northeast fish stocks? The short answer, per local charter captains, is no. Weakfish, striped bass, and bluefish that spawn in spring weren't affected. Debris, chemical spills, and sewage leaks caused by Sandy could hurt niche areas in bay systems, but the stripers, bluefish, and bluefin tuna that were near the coasts prior to the storm came back within weeks of its passing. In fact, large storms can actually help flush bay systems, form new structure, and improve fishing. —J.C.

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pay the bills had to say a week after the storm: "It made me realize how many people love the store. I still can't believe how many friends and anglers reached out to help rebuild."

—John Bushell Jr., owner, Betty & Nick's Bait & Tackle, Seaside Park, N.J.

"Sandy made me feel like I underestimated the potential of every hurricane that's ever hit the Jersey coast. I couldn't get my head around things like the Seaside Pier being gone until I saw it with my own eyes from the ocean."

—Capt. Dave DeGennaro, Hi-Fliter Charters, Barnegat, N.J.

"I figured eventually I'd see a storm of this magnitude. I just didn't know it was going to be Sandy until a day or two before it hit. It's really the surf-fishing community that got hit the hardest because they lost so much access."

—Capt. Gene Quigley, Shore Catch Guide Service, Point Pleasant, N.J.

"My boats made it through O.K., but the first floor of my home was destroyed. I'm wondering how much it's worth rebuilding because the fact is we're living through a climate change and I think storms like this could become more frequent."

—Capt. John McMurray, One More Cast Charters, Brooklyn, N.Y.



## PLACES

## TEX-MEX LUNKERS

Run to the border for some of the best big-bass fishing (and chicken-fried eating) anywhere **By David Draper**

**A** decade or so ago, the best bass fishing on the planet was in Mexico. Today, you don't need a passport for a chance at a double-digit bass. Falcon International Reservoir, or Falcon Lake as locals call it, straddles the Texas-Mexico border and is fast becoming known as the place to go to catch a lunker of a lifetime. Here's your guide to fishing in nearby Zapata, Texas, this month.

## GUIDING LIGHT

For less than \$100, you can get a quaint cabin just off the water at the Beacon Lodge (A on map; [beaconlodgezapata.com](http://beaconlodgezapata.com)). Book early, because the Beacon sells out when the bite is on.

## A TEXAS TASTE TEST

Chicken-fried steak is a south Texas staple, and every restaurant likes to claim it serves the best.



In Zapata, locals are divided between the Steak House (B; 956-765-4523) or El Rincon (C; 956-765-8900). We suggest you try both.

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

If you think you can spend hours on Falcon Lake Tackle's comprehensive and informative website, wait until you step into the joint (D; [tackleandrods.com](http://tackleandrods.com)). James and Tom Bendele

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- **Scary Good** After its completion in 1954, Falcon Reservoir flooded towns on both sides of the border—leaving ruins for bass structure.

maintain a full-service tackle shop and love to fill anglers in on what's biting where.

#### SUNNY AND SHALLOW

Later in the month, warm, sunny days will send water temperatures into the high 60s. That's when you should toss a 7-inch Senko in watermelon red into flooded brush and rocky points that are flanked by deeper water if you want numbers of good fish. For that 10-pound trophy, you may have to dig a bit with a deep-diving crankbait, such as the Norman DD22 in tilapia or the new Strike King 10XD that'll get down to where Falcon Reservoir's lunkers tend to hang out this time of year.

#### SOUTH OF THE BORDER

There's plenty of structure to keep you busy on the U.S. side of the lake, but if you decide to fish in international waters, be sure to have a Mexican fishing license in your pocket. Pick one up at Falcon Lake Tackle or Robert's Fish N' Tackle in Zapata (E: robertsfishtackle.com)—and ask for the best (and safest) spots to fish. ☐



Map by PETE SUCHESKI

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**David E. Petzal** answers your questions about guns, shooting, hunting, and life

*My dad says deer hunters had more skills a generation or two ago, but I think that young hunters—who have longer seasons, an interest in land management, and more tactical hunting strategies—are the better hunters. What do you think?*

I think that the new generation of deer hunters is more efficient at getting deer, but that is partly because the equipment they have is several light-years ahead of what we used nearly 50 years ago when I broke into the sport.

As for skill, much as I would like to say that my generation was better, it probably wasn't. Hunting then was far easier and cheaper to come by, and we didn't appreciate it as much as today's hunters do. The new guys really work at every aspect of deer hunting, from accessing good property to scouting and strategy. They're much better informed, and much safer, too.

Saying this has been only a little more painful than digging out my left eye with a spoon.

*Q: I bought a new rifle that is extremely accurate with some factory loads but horribly inaccurate with others. Why does this happen?*

**A:** That is because different bullets, at different velocities, cause the barrel to twang in a particular pattern, just like a tuning fork. If the twang is consistent, the load will shoot accurately. If the twang varies from shot to shot, no dice. Either that, or the rifle dislikes the way you dress and is expressing its displeasure.

*Q: It seems like the trend in big-game rifles is all about long range. How far is too far?*

**A:** Too far is when she says: "I meant no, and you get your hand out of there before you lose it." Oops, lost my train of thought. We were talking about shooting. There is no single answer; it depends on the hunter, his equipment, and how much effort he's willing to invest in his shooting. For the average nimrod, probably 150 yards is the limit. For a competent, but not great, shot, 300 yards. For someone who's really good, 600.

*Q: What's the absolute worst factory rifle you've seen in your career?*

**A:** Do you mind if I name a semi-factory rifle? Of course not; what do you have to say about it? The gun that leaps out is a Dakota Arms .458 that was built for me in 1988. Nothing worked. It was like they threw parts in a bin and shook it and sent me the result. The letter I sent to Dakota detailing everything that was wrong filled two single-spaced pages. I never got an answer.

*Q: I just read that home defense is now the No. 1 reason that people buy guns. Why do you think that is?*

**A:** I believe that more and more people these days are paying attention to what shooting instructor Clint Smith says: "When seconds count, the police are only minutes away." I also think that the rise in gun sales is an inverse indicator of our faith in government to do anything very effectively, including protect us from harm. Or, look at it this way: If Joe Biden says that no one wants to take away your Beretta, would you be especially comforted? 25



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## SHOTGUNS

# AUTOMATIC LIKING

The Remington 1100 made wingshooters drop their doubles 50 years ago, and it's still getting birds today

By Phil Bourjaily

**M**ANY GUNS ARE CALLED revolutionary, but few could claim to have made Americans better wingshooters. The gas-operated Remington 1100 autoloading shotgun, introduced 50 years ago, did just that.

The 1100 reduced recoil like no other gun. It was reliable. It was affordable, with a suggested retail of \$145. And its design made the 1100 easy for anyone to shoot. It's the gun that made us a nation of semiauto shooters.

## THAT NEW COMPUTER THING

It's no stretch to call the 1100 the first truly modern shotgun. Remington's engineering team made extensive use of then new (and huge) computers to design and test the gun in a laboratory prior to its release in Jan. 1963. It was mass produced, with pressed and

stamped parts and assembly-line techniques perfected during World War II. Like the M1 Garand rifle, it harnessed the expanding gases of each fired shell to cycle the action. It was even finished in the new RKW epoxy finish developed by parent company DuPont to protect bowling pins, and it was press-checked by machine. By Cuban Missile Crisis-era standards, everything about the 1100 was cutting edge.

Before the 1100, there were two types of semiautos: (1) recoil-operated guns based on John Browning's 1903 long-recoil A5; and (2) gas-operated models that didn't work very well. The 1100 was projected to replace three semiautos in the company's lineup: the long-recoil 11-48; and the 58 and the 878 Automaster, both good gas guns but difficult to maintain.



• **Life Gun** Wayne Morine bought this 1100 when he was 14 by saving his \$1-per-hour Iowa tomato-farm pay in 1973. He has taken pheasants, rabbits, ducks, and deer with the gun—and still shoots it.

Unlike previous gas guns, the 1100 took full advantage of the recoil-reducing, self-cleaning potential of gas. The designers moved the gas ports in the barrel closer to the chamber, directing hotter, higher-pressure gases into the action with every shot, scouring it of residue and helping the gun shoot longer between cleanings.

Moving the ports back had another advantage: the earlier, larger gas dump combined with a heavy steel inertia sleeve reduced the peak of recoil impulse dramatically, spreading the sensation out over a longer time. The result was a gun that turned kick into a shove and lived up to Remington's remarkable claims of 40 to 50 percent less felt recoil.

In addition, the 1100 had stock dimensions that seemed to fit everyone. The 1100 stock's secret, I have always believed, is the thin

**HUNTING AND FISHING SKILLS IN EVERYDAY LIFE** This month's strategy: Set up a trail cam in the office kitchen if your lunch keeps disappearing



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TROPHY

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\*Individual results may vary. \*\*Clinical studies with osteoarthritis patients.

### Important Safety Information:

All prescription NSAIDs, like CELEBREX, ibuprofen, naproxen and meloxicam have the same cardiovascular warning. They may all increase the chance of heart attack or stroke, which can lead to death. This chance increases if you have heart disease or risk factors for it, such as high blood pressure or when NSAIDs are taken for long periods. CELEBREX should not be used right before or after certain heart surgeries.

Serious skin reactions, or stomach and intestine problems such as bleeding and ulcers, can occur without warning and may cause death. Patients taking aspirin and the elderly are at increased risk for stomach bleeding and ulcers.

See the Medication Guide on the next page for important information about Celebrex and other prescription NSAIDs.

Tell your doctor if you have: a history of ulcers or bleeding in the stomach or intestines; high blood pressure or heart failure; or kidney or liver problems.

CELEBREX should not be taken in late pregnancy.

Life-threatening allergic reactions can occur with CELEBREX. Get help right away if you've had swelling of the face or throat or trouble breathing. Do not take it if you've had an asthma attack, hives, or other allergies to aspirin, other NSAIDs or certain drugs called sulfonamides.

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**Medication Guide**  
for  
**Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)**  
(See the end of this Medication Guide  
for a list of prescription NSAID medicines.)

**What is the most important information I should know about medicines called Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)?**

NSAID medicines may increase the chance of a heart attack or stroke that can lead to death.

This chance increases:

- with longer use of NSAID medicines
- in people who have heart disease

NSAID medicines should never be used right before or after a heart surgery called a "coronary artery bypass graft (CABG)."

NSAID medicines can cause ulcers and bleeding in the stomach and intestines at any time during treatment. **Ulcers and bleeding:**

- can happen without warning symptoms
- may cause death

**The chance of a person getting an ulcer or bleeding increases with:**

- taking medicines called "corticosteroids" and "anticoagulants"
- longer use
- smoking
- drinking alcohol
- older age
- having poor health

**NSAID medicines should only be used:**

- exactly as prescribed
- at the lowest dose possible for your treatment
- for the shortest time needed

**What are Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)?**

NSAID medicines are used to treat pain and redness, swelling, and heat (inflammation) from medical conditions such as:

- different types of arthritis
- menstrual cramps and other types of short-term pain

**Who should not take a Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID)?**

**Do not take an NSAID medicine:**

- if you had an asthma attack, hives, or other allergic reaction with aspirin or any other NSAID medicine
- for pain right before or after heart bypass surgery

**Tell your healthcare provider:**

- about all of your medical conditions.
- about all of the medicines you take. NSAIDs and some other medicines can interact with each other and cause serious side effects. **Keep a list of your medicines to show to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.**
- if you are pregnant. NSAID medicines should not be used by pregnant women late in their pregnancy.
- if you are breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor.

**What are the possible side effects of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)?**

**Serious side effects include:**

- heart attack
- stroke
- high blood pressure
- heart failure from body swelling (fluid retention)
- kidney problems including kidney failure
- bleeding and ulcers in the stomach and intestine
- low red blood cells (anemia)
- life-threatening skin reactions
- life-threatening allergic reactions
- liver problems including liver failure
- asthma attacks in people who have asthma

**Other side effects include:**

- stomach pain
- constipation
- diarrhea
- gas
- heartburn
- nausea
- vomiting
- dizziness

**Get emergency help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**

- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- chest pain
- weakness in one part or side of your body
- slurred speech
- swelling of the face or throat

**Stop your NSAID medicine and call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**

- nausea
- more tired or weaker than usual
- itching
- your skin or eyes look yellow
- stomach pain
- flu-like symptoms
- vomit blood
- there is blood in your bowel movement or it is black and sticky like tar
- skin rash or blisters with fever
- unusual weight gain
- swelling of the arms and legs, hands and feet

These are not all the side effects with NSAID medicines. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information about NSAID medicines.

**Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.**

**Other information about Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)**

- Aspirin is an NSAID medicine but it does not increase the chance of a heart attack. Aspirin can cause bleeding in the brain, stomach, and intestines. Aspirin can also cause ulcers in the stomach and intestines.
- Some of these NSAID medicines are sold in lower doses without a prescription (over-the-counter). Talk to your healthcare provider before using over-the-counter NSAIDs for more than 10 days.

**NSAID medicines that need a prescription**

Generic Name	Tradename
Celecoxib	Celebrex
Diclofenac	Cataflam, Voltaren, Arthrotec (combined with misoprostol)
Diflunisal	Dolobid
Etidolac	Lodine, Lodine XL
Fenoprofen	Naifon, Naifon 200
Flurbiprofen	Ansaid
Ibuprofen	Motrin, Ibruprofen, Vicoprofen* (combined with hydrocodone), Combunox (combined with oxycodone)
Indomethacin	Indocin, Indocin SR, Indo-Lemmon, Indomethagan
Ketoprofen	Oruval
Ketorolac	Toradol
Mefenamic Acid	Ponstel
Meloxicam	Mobic
Nabumetone	Relafen
Naproxen	Naprosyn, Anaprox, Anaprox DS, EC-Naproxyn, Naprelan, Naprapac (copackaged with lansoprazole)
Oxaprozin	Daypro
Piroxicam	Feldene
Sulindac	Clinoril
Tolmetin	Tolectin, Tolectin DS, Tolectin 600

\* Vicoprofen contains the same dose of ibuprofen as over-the-counter (OTC) NSAIDs, and is usually used for less than 10 days to treat pain. The OTC NSAID label warns that long term continuous use may increase the risk of heart attack or stroke.

*This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. LAB-0609-1.0*



comb that lets everybody, even the round-faced and heavyset, "get down" on the gun. Also, the 12-gauge 1100 was actually built on a 16-gauge 11-48 receiver, contributing to the gun's sleek profile and sure-pointing qualities.

When the 12-gauge 1100 rolled out, the hunting, magnum, skeet, and trap models became instant hits in the field and among competitors. It was the most commonly used gun at the 1966 World Skeet Championships. Smallbore guns followed. The Remington Model 11-87, introduced in the 1980s, was based on the 1100. It added the capability of shooting 2½-inch and 3-inch shells without changing barrels. Even after the 11-87 came out, though, the 1100 stayed in the line.

To celebrate the 1100's distinguished career, Remington has released a limited edition of 50th anniversary guns with engraving and golden inlay, patterned after the 2 millionth 1100 made by the Remington custom shop in 1977. It has a glossy finish over beautiful wood with traditional white-line spacers. In place of the traditional (but cheesy) pressed checkering, there is cut fleur-de-lis checkering. Like most 12-gauge 1100s, it weighs nearly 8 pounds but points very well and recoils gently. On the skeet field I broke targets with it effortlessly from a low gun start. It kicked noticeably less than my Beretta 391 when I shot the two guns in turn. It was easy to imagine what a revelation the 1100 must have seemed to shooters and hunters in 1963.

#### SHOOTING AN 1100 TODAY

Fifty years down the road, the 1100 is no longer state of the art. New-generation semiautos cycle faster, shoot a wider range of loads, and go much, much longer between cleanings. But 1100s chug along in the hands of their devoted fans. Lisa Walters of Remington consumer service frequently gets calls from customers asking to date guns and finds they are still shooting first-year 1963 models. "I tell them their grandfather had good taste," she says.

"Those guns don't need much to work, just little things like gas-system rings, bolt links, magazine and action springs, all of which are easy to replace."

Jay Bunting, Remington's VP of distributor sales, is an All-American skeet shooter who shot 1100s competitively for many years. "Other guns have redefined maintenance, but if you keep an 1100 clean, it will shoot with anything," says Bunting, who quick-cleans his 1100 every 100 rounds. "I pull it apart and rub 000 steel wool on the magazine tube and inside the inertia sleeve. I pull off the O-ring—

#### GEAR TIP



#### SPRING INTO ACTION (WITH SOME HELP)

As waterfowlers grow older and fatter, an increasing number have trouble sitting up to shoot in their layout blinds. Some will dig down in the field a little bit below the seat or their feet, making it easier to get into position. One group of older hunters I know all bought Ab Rockets (they called them "A-B rockets") from TV infomercials and put the spring-loaded seats in their blinds to give them a boost. Final Approach takes that idea and makes it lighter and more practical with the Up-N-At-Em seat (\$130; fabrand.com). The weight of your upper body holds the seatback down without effort. As you sit up, it gives you a helpful push into the upright shooting position. It is a sad commentary that we have come to this, but the Up-N-At-Em works. —P.B.

the magazine-cap threads scrub the fouling away—and oil the piston rings lightly. Put a little oil on the action bars and the gun is ready to go again." He says most 1100s will easily run 300 to 400 rounds between cleanings—not much by Beretta, Browning, or Benelli standards, but a whole season for a lot of hunters.

With the exception of Remington's new Versa Max, the 1100 still feels like the softest-shooting semiauto of all to me. That soft recoil made me choose a 20-gauge youth model as the gun my sons would use when I taught them to shoot. I also have a '70s-vintage 1100 trap gun dinged with scratches and rust spots courtesy of the previous owner, who used it as a duck gun. There is nothing wrong with it inside, and it's the gun I loan to kids on our high school trap club who aren't hitting with their own guns. It fits them. It doesn't hurt. Everyone's score goes up when they shoot that 1100, just as scores have for 50 years. With over 4 million produced, and more rolling off the line in Ilion, N.Y., and a price that starts at just over \$1,000 today, there's definitely something to celebrate. **15**

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## RIFLES

# THE RIGHT ROD

If you want to shoot straight, you had better watch what you stick down your barrel **By David E. Petzal**



**A** BAD CLEANING ROD used in any manner, or a good cleaning rod used improperly, can wreck a barrel in a surprisingly short time. So, start with a good rod—one that either doesn't bend at all or flexes a little but always snaps back straight. An example of the unbending type would be one made by J. Dewey Rods ([deweyrods.com](http://deweyrods.com)). It's nylon-coated stainless steel with a ball-bearing handle.

An example of the latter—and what I use—would be the rods made by Neil Jones ([neiljones.com](http://neiljones.com)). They're made of uncoated spring steel, and though they will flex if you use a lot of muscle, they snap back dead straight. Because they're not stainless they will rust on you, so don't keep them in your damp garage.

### RODS TO AVOID

Steer clear of anything made of aluminum or brass. Jointed rods, of any construction, also fall into this category; they're simply too flimsy, and if the joints don't fit together precisely (many don't), little edges can stick out and cause all sorts of mayhem in the bore. (They do make a handy tool to punch out mud or snow that clogs the muzzle.)

- **Straight Up** A bore guide keeps the cleaning rod centered in the barrel.

### GUIDING HAND

Bore guides are nothing more than tubes that lock into the receiver and keep the rod centered on its trip down the barrel. They can range from simple, inexpensive plastic models to the very elegant ones made by Neil Jones. Either way, it's no accident that they're held as sacred objects by knowledgeable shooters, since they make it nearly impossible to do anything bad to your barrel—provided you have a decent rod.

### TIP TIPS

Rods have two types of tips: slotted and pointed (jag). Slotted tips don't give you as good a patch-to-bore fit as jags, and they invite you to drag a dirty patch back and forth through the barrel. That is not going to do your rifling any good. With a jag, you impale the patch on its point and shove it down the barrel. When you pull the rod back, the patch falls off. Don't bother with stainless-steel brushes; they are an abomination. Use phosphor-bronze bristles instead.

The best thing you can do to a cleaning rod is wipe it off a lot. I keep a roll of paper towels over my workbench and wipe my rod every time it comes out of the bore. **ES**





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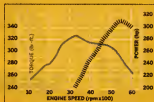
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## CONSERVATION

# HEROES OF CONSERVATION

A Tennessee sportsman gets disabled hunters back in the duck blind **By Kristyn Brady**

• **Camo Corps**  
Hall (center) with military veterans and volunteers.



## HEALING THROUGH HUNTING SHANE HALL, DYERSBURG, TENN.

Drawing from his own rehabilitation experience after an accident left him dependent on a wheelchair, Hall has been organizing hunts for disabled adults and children, and military veterans with physical and emotional wounds, for the past 12 years. In his role as state volunteer coordinator of the National Wild Turkey Federation's Wheelin' Sportsmen, he plans 14 hunts—each for up to 20 hunters—per year, arranging food donations and volunteer support. “I can’t tell you how passionate I am about this,” says Hall. “It is such remarkable therapy to do what you love in the outdoors.”

## DEFENDING ACCESS AND DUCK HABITAT BOB OVERLY, BREMERTON, WASH.

As president of the Bremerton Sportsmen's Club, Overly has helped secure two new public access points at local fishing waters and coordinates volunteers to maintain seven others. After a 32-year career as a game warden, Overly continues to monitor more than 70 wood-duck nesting boxes and to source donated cedar and milling labor to build more. He also helps provide salmon to local food banks.



## CAMPAIGNING FOR YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROATS DAVID SWEET, CODY, WYD.

Five years ago, Sweet took on leadership of the Save the Yellowstone Cutthroat Project, Trout Unlimited's No. 2 priority project nationally, to reduce numbers of illegally stocked lake trout decimating the native cutthroats in Yellowstone Lake. He travels extensively to solicit support, and volunteers with the Park Service to net adult lake trout, locate spawning areas, and destroy eggs. “This year we saw significant improvement, but we have a long way to go,” says Sweet.



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### THE SPEAR

Steffen builds custom spears (like this one) tied off with 20 feet of nylon cord for an easy retrieve in deep water. If your metal forge is on the Fritz, try the Pike/Muskie Spear with backer weights (\$190; [darkhousegearandtackle.com](http://darkhousegearandtackle.com)).



# SPORTSMAN'S NOTEBOOK

## A STAB IN THE DARK

Leave the tip-ups and bait buckets in the garage. This hard-water bite requires a dark shanty and a sharp spear

By Michael R. Shea

Turn off the lights and grab a spear—because ice fishing just got exciting. With dark-house spearing, sunlight penetrates the ice but not your blacked-out shack, creating a window on the world below. South Dakota guide Paul Steffen (huntpiere.com), who's skewered walleyes and pike on Lake Oahe, compares it to bowhunting. "When the fish comes to you, it's like a buck coming in," he says. "Your fists get shaking and your heart starts pounding."

## HOUSE RULES

How to find a hole, attract your target, and pick your dinner

F&S

### → SUN BLOCK

If your shanty has windows, black them out with tinfoil.



### → BAIT SPREAD

Set your lures on the far sides of the hole, with the decoy in between—all three two-thirds of the way to the bottom.

**→ ICE SITES** Start by searching for bottom around 10 feet deep that gradually drops off to 40 or 50 feet of water. Steffen says the mouth of a small bay with soft breaklines is a good place to begin.

### → DRILL, BABY, DRILL

Steffen augers four holes in the ice, then cuts out a 3x6-foot block with a saw. A plywood ice shack without windows (or a pop-up shanty) goes up and the hunt is on.

### → BAITING GAME

Steffen rigs two jigging sticks—one with a white 1-ounce Magnum Force Rat-L-Trap, the other with a white Kalin's soft plastic. "We use longer 4- or 5-inch grubs and lizards," he says, "anything with a lot of tentacles that will show motion in the water." He rigs a third rod to a fish decoy, which is dropped between the lures. "Use the smallest decoy possible for walleyes, and the largest one for pike."

**→ TAKE A STAB** When a fish appears, ease the spear points as close as possible—just over the back of the fish's head—then shove off. Too much splash, and you'll spook the fish. "The fish don't give you a lot of options. Sometimes they stop, most times they don't. You want to be prepared."

**Note:** Spearing is illegal in some states, and laws on species and line limits vary. Check local regs.

### HOT ICE

**LAKE OAHE, PIERRE, S.D.** Oahe has liberal regs and a long history of quality dark-house fishing. Mixed bags of four walleyes and six pike are not uncommon. **FORT BLACK LAKE, CHEBOYGAN, MICH.** This north-central Michigan honey hole is one of the few places where you can spear giant sturgeon. Trophy pike and muskies are also on the menu. **CASS LAKE, CASS LAKE, MINN.** In 2011 this popular ice-fishing spot opened to dark-house spearing, meaning fresh ground for cold-weather spearmen looking for monster pike.

## SPEAR GEAR

Gear up and channel your inner Queequeg

← **SAW** Fish's Folding Ice Saw (\$125; icesaw.com) has a 42-inch blue-steel blade that makes quick work of thick ice. You'll wear out before these ice-teeth do.



**TONGS** It's bad form to shove the ice block under the ice. It can spook fish and float into decoy lines. Get a pair of Stand-up Ice Tongs (\$60; darkhouse spearingupply.com).



**SHANTY** If you don't want to build a windowless plywood shack, try the Eskimo Quickfish 2 tent (\$170; get eskimo.com). It's easy to set up, and the windows can zip shut.



**DECOY** You could spend plenty on hand-carved decoys—only to see them get speared. Steffen likes the classic red-and-white Bruell decoy (\$20-\$35; littlejimssports.com).



FOOD

## VENISON NACHOS—CARNITAS STYLE

ENJOY THE BIG GAME WITH A BIG PILE OF CHIPS, CHEESE, AND DEER &gt; By Jonathan Miles

→ The ultimate Super Bowl indulgence: nachos loaded with bubbling cheddar and shredded venison that's been slow-cooked with chipotles and spices and then quickly seared—in the style of Mexico's legendary pork carnitas—for some crispy, hyper-flavored edges. You may forget about the game altogether.

## INGREDIENTS

About 2 lb. venison roast, trimmed and cut into substantial chunks (1½ inch or so)

3 Tbsp. olive oil

6 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

1 Tbsp. juniper berries

2 Tbsp. ground cumin

2 Tbsp. fresh oregano

4 bay leaves

2 canned chipotle chiles in adobo sauce, roughly chopped

4 cups chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth

¼ cup lard (or olive oil)

Tortilla chips

8 oz. shredded sharp cheddar cheese

For garnishing: limes, chopped cilantro, sour cream

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

[1] Pat the venison dry with paper towels, and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the venison, in batches so as not to overcrowd the pan, and brown on all sides, about 12 minutes total. Transfer the browned pieces to a plate.

Add the garlic to the pot and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute, then add the juniper berries, cumin, oregano, bay leaves, chipotles, and generous dashes of salt and pepper. Stir to combine, and cook for about 30 seconds more. Add the chicken stock along with the reserved venison and any juices on the plate. Bring to

a simmer and cook, partly covered, for about 1½ to 2 hours, or until the venison is very tender but not quite falling apart.

Remove the lid and continue to simmer for about 30 minutes more, until the liquid has almost evaporated.

[2] Remove the venison with a slotted spoon, transferring it to a plate. Discard any remaining liquid and solids and clean and dry the pot.

Return the pot to the stove over medium-high heat and add the lard or olive oil. When hot, add the reserved venison pieces in batches and fry them until crispy. Transfer to a

paper towel-lined plate. Shred the pieces when cool enough to handle.

[3] Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Arrange tortilla chips on a sheet pan or, ideally, an ovenproof serving platter. Sprinkle the cheese over the chips, distributing evenly, then do the same with the shredded venison. Place in the oven and cook until the cheese has melted and the venison is sizzling.

[4] Garnish as desired: a few dollops of sour cream, some cilantro, a few squeezes of lime. You can add guacamole or pickled jalapeños, too. Serve immediately. Serves at least 6

Photograph by  
JOHNNY MILLER





## EXPERTS

## PULL THE TRIGGER

DRAW REACTION STRIKES FROM NON-FEEDING LUNKERS

&gt; By Don Wirth

Because largemouth and smallmouth bass typically spend only a few minutes out of each day feeding, the savviest pro tournament anglers have devised ways to goad the fish into biting even when they're not hungry. Here, four top tour anglers have shared their go-to lures and the aggressive tactics they use to catch unaggressive early-season lunkers.



**TUBE SHAKE** Kevin VanDam duces giant smallies in clear lakes by repeatedly shaking a tube bait in their faces. He rigs the tube on a jighead with the hook point exposed, casts it to the nest, reels up the slack line, then gently squeezes the rod handle. "This activates the rod tip and makes the lure shake and quiver on the bottom, which eventually agitates the fish into striking."



**RIP & RATTLE** Kelly Jordan draws bass out of submerged grass by ripping a lipless rattling crankbait through the vegetation. He casts the noisy artificial to a weedbed, lets it sink on a tight line, then strokes his rod back sharply the instant he feels the lure tick the cover. Says Jordan: "Hog bass see the lure's flash as it shoots out of the grass and jump all over it."



**BUZZ OFF** "When it comes to triggering reaction strikes, nothing tops a buzzbait," says Dustin Wilks. "Bass hit this lure strictly because it ticks them off." Wilks combs the surface of potential largemouth spawning coves in early spring with a black buzzer. "No tricky presentations required. Just retrieve it slowly past cover. And hang on to your rod."



**BUMP & GRIND** Pete Ponds gets reaction strikes by grinding a shallow-running square-bill crankbait down submerged logs. "I'll cast the plug past the log, then use my rod to steer it into the cover," he says. "The square-bill's unique lip design lets it deflect off sunken wood, mimicking the herky-jerky movements of a fleeing bluegill. Bass mistake it for a bite-size sunfish."

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## SPORTSMAN'S NOTEBOOK

Wild Cat Bobcats live in thick country, so avoid hunting wide open fields.



### SKILLS

## FELINE COME-ON

CALL IN BOBCATS DAY OR NIGHT • By Will Brantley

➔ Jeff Whitson is a world-class cat caller, but not in the sense of whistling at pretty women. Whitson is from the Texas Hill Country, and Texans are brought up with manners. No, he's a predator hunting guide (325-456-1251), and bobcats are his specialty. Though he lives in a better area than most for predator calling, Whitson says the fundamentals for calling up a bobcat are the same regardless of where you hunt. Here they are:

➔ **CAT COUNTRY** "You have to call where cats live," Whitson says. That means thick, rugged country free of human interference. You won't catch many bobcats hunting in wide open fields next to the road. Whitson's favorite spots are rocky, brushy creek draws. If he can find fresh tracks and scat in such an area, he's in business. All he needs for a setup is an opening for a shot near that thick cover.

➔ **PRIME TIMES** Unlike coyotes, bobcats rely on their eyes and ears more than their noses, so the wind doesn't matter much. Most of Whitson's hunting is at night with the help of a red-filtered spotlight. Cats can be called up during the day, too, but you'll need a decoy. One of Whitson's favorites is a turkey feather tied to a string on a stick so it can flutter in the breeze.

➔ **CURIOSITY KILLS** Whitson uses electronic callers, and a baby cottontail in distress is his favorite sound for predators. "I'll add frequent pauses to my calling if I'm after bobcats," he says. "It's not unusual for a cat to take 45 minutes before it shows itself. With a light at night, you can spot their eyes in the brush. Keep them curious, and eventually they'll give you a shot."



### Good Call

E-callers are great, but once a predator gets in close, Whitson likes the control of a manual call, such as a Burnham Brothers MB-1 Mini Blaster, to coax the critter those last few steps (\$12; burnhambrothers.com).

—W.B.



For more outdoor skills and how-to videos, visit [totaloutdoorsmanchallenge.com](http://totaloutdoorsmanchallenge.com)



## TIPS

## Egg Beaters

SCORE WINTER STEELHEAD WITH THESE THREE EGG BAITS • By Joe Carmele



1

**STONED COLD** If the river stains in winter, open your fly box and reach for a Meth Egg (umpqua.com). Slowly drift the pattern under a strike indicator through areas of soft current, or high-stick it with plenty of lead in the fast runs steelhead use to advance upriver. The flashy material reflects even low amounts of sunlight and gets chromers hyper.



2

**MAN, YOU BLUE IT** By this time in the season, steelhead have seen plenty of pink, orange, and natural beads on center-pin rigs. Which is why you should try blue. This sleeper color triggers big bites from pressured fish that have been barraged by every other angler's go-to tints. Blue Glow beads (troutbeads.com) are secret weapons from Alaska to New York.



3

**YELLOW FEVER** You won't find garlic, shrimp, or cheese scent in a jar of Yellow Jackets from Pautzke (pautzke.com). These eggs maintain the yellow hue and mottling of natural brown and rainbow trout roe that big chromers crave. Drift them in a spawn bag through fast water or singly in the slower stuff. However you fish them, just be sure to hang on.

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## PROJECTS

## NECK TIES

HOW TO MAKE A P-CORD  
DUCK AND GOOSE STRAP

> By M.D. Johnson

## PART I: THE DROPPER CORDS

**STRAND BY ME** Cut four 40-inch strands of p-cord and singe each end with a lighter. Measure 7 inches from each end and tie an overhand knot to serve as the stops for the loops.

**NOOSE FIT** Double over one tag to form a sliding loop, following steps A, B, and C. Repeat on each tag end.

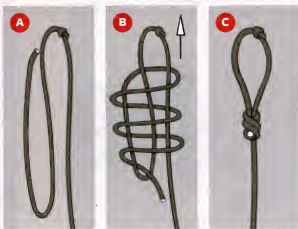
**MARK THAT SPOT** Fold the dropper cords in half and mark the center point. Next, lay them flat and measure 5 inches up and down from the center mark.

**PART II: THE SHOULDER STRAP TIES THAT BIND** Cut two 12-foot lengths of p-cord. These are the tying cords, and one will be used for each pair of droppers.

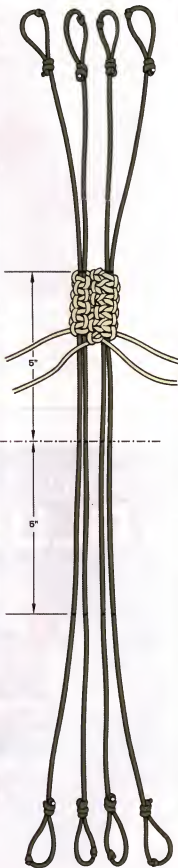
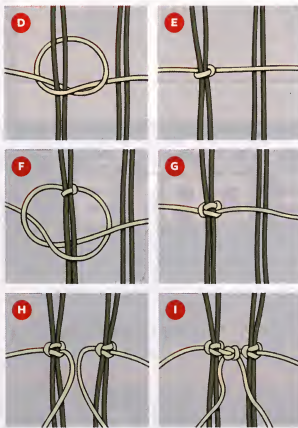
**SQUARE ONE** Lay the dropper pairs side by side, 2 inches apart, on a work surface. Center one of the tying cords under one pair of the droppers at the upper 5-inch mark you drew. Attach the cord using a square knot, following steps D-G. Repeat with the second tying cord and dropper pair.

**COME TOGETHER** Use the two innermost strands of the tying cords to bridge the dropper pairs with another square knot (steps H and I). Keep working side to side to center with the square knots until you reach the bottom 5-inch marks. Trim all four ends on the tying cords to 1/4 inch. Butt each pair together and bond them with the lighter.

## DROPPER CORDS: THE GOOSE NOOSE



## SHOULDER STRAP: THE SQUARE WEAVE



## WHAT YOU'LL NEED



• 38' parachute cord



• Lighter



• Permanent marker



• Utility knife



• Tape measure



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Talk with your doctor first. Make sure your heart is healthy enough to have sex. If you have chest pain, nausea, or other discomforts during sex, seek medical help right away.

In the rare event of an erection lasting more than four hours, seek immediate medical help to avoid long-term injury.

In rare instances, men who take PDE5 inhibitors (oral erectile dysfunction medicines, including VIAGRA) reported a sudden decrease or loss of vision, or sudden decrease or loss of hearing. It is not possible to determine whether these events are related directly to these medicines or to other factors. If you experience any of these symptoms, stop taking PDE5 inhibitors, including VIAGRA, and call a doctor right away.

The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less common are bluish or blurred vision, or being sensitive to light. These may occur for a brief time.

VIAGRA does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

Please see Important Facts for VIAGRA on the following page or visit [viagra.com](http://viagra.com) for full prescribing information.

You are encouraged to report negative

side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA.

Visit [www.FDA.gov/medwatch](http://www.FDA.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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## IMPORTANT FACTS

**VIAGRA<sup>®</sup>**  
(sildenafil citrate) tablets

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### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA

Never take VIAGRA if you take any medicines with nitrates. This includes nitroglycerin. Your blood pressure could drop quickly. It could fall to an unsafe or life-threatening level.

### ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)

Erectile dysfunction means a man cannot get or keep an erection. Health problems, injury, or side effects of drugs may cause ED. The cause may not be known.

### ABOUT VIAGRA

VIAGRA is used to treat ED in men. When you want to have sex, VIAGRA can help you get and keep an erection when you are sexually excited. You cannot get an erection just by taking the pill. Only your doctor can prescribe VIAGRA.

VIAGRA does not cure ED.

VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or HIV. You will need to use a condom.

VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

### WHO IS VIAGRA FOR?

Who should take VIAGRA?

Men who have ED and whose heart is healthy enough for sex.

Who should NOT take VIAGRA?

- If you ever take medicines with nitrates:
  - Medicines that treat chest pain (angina), such as nitroglycerin or isosorbide mononitrate or dinitrate
- If you use some street drugs, such as "poppers" (amyl nitrate or nitrite)
- If you are allergic to anything in the VIAGRA tablet

### BEFORE YOU START VIAGRA

Tell your doctor if you have or ever had:

- Heart attack, abnormal heartbeats, or stroke
- Heart problems, such as heart failure, chest pain, or aortic valve narrowing
- Low or high blood pressure
- Severe vision loss
- An eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa
- Kidney or liver problems
- Blood problems, such as sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- A deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- Stomach ulcers or any kind of bleeding problems

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell your doctor if you take or use:

- Medicines called alpha-blockers to treat high blood pressure or prostate problems. Your blood pressure could suddenly get too low. You could get dizzy or faint. Your doctor may start you on a lower dose of VIAGRA.
- Medicines called protease inhibitors for HIV. Your doctor may prescribe a 25 mg dose. Your doctor may limit VIAGRA to 25 mg in a 48-hour period.
- Other methods to cause erections. These include pills, injections, implants, or pumps.
- A medicine called REVATIO. VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO as REVATIO contains sildenafil, the same medicine found in VIAGRA.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIAGRA

Side effects are mostly mild to moderate. They usually go away after a few hours. Some of these are more likely to happen with higher doses.

The most common side effects are:

- Headache
- Feeling flushed
- Upset stomach

Less common side effects are:

- Trouble telling blue and green apart or seeing a blue tinge on things
- Eyes being more sensitive to light
- Blurred vision

Rarely, a small number of men taking VIAGRA have reported these serious events:

- Having an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If the erection is not treated right away, long-term loss of potency could occur.
- Sudden decrease or loss of sight in one or both eyes. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and medicines like it or caused by other factors. They may be caused by conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes. If you have sudden vision changes, stop using VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor right away.
- Sudden decrease or loss of hearing. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and medicines like it or caused by other factors. If you have sudden hearing changes, stop using VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor right away.
- Heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeats, and death. We do not know whether these events are caused by VIAGRA or caused by other factors. Most of these happened in men who already had heart problems.

If you have any of these problems, stop VIAGRA. Call your doctor right away.

### HOW TO TAKE VIAGRA

Do:

- Take VIAGRA only the way your doctor tells you. VIAGRA comes in 25 mg, 50 mg, and 100 mg tablets. Your doctor will tell you how much to take.
- If you are over 65 or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg).
- Take VIAGRA about 1 hour before you want to have sex. VIAGRA starts to work in about 30 minutes when you are sexually excited. VIAGRA lasts up to 4 hours.

Don't:

- Do not take VIAGRA more than once a day.
- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor tells you. If you think you need more VIAGRA, talk with your doctor.
- Do not start or stop any other medicines before checking with your doctor.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for complete product information OR
- Go to [www.viagra.com](http://www.viagra.com) or call (888) 4-VIAGRA (484-2472).

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## FIELD LIFE

## MEET THE FOX SQUIRREL

HOW TO HUNT THE LARGEST (AND INCREASINGLY COMMON) TREE SQUIRREL IN NORTH AMERICA > **By T. Edward Nickens**



• **Three of a Kind** Fox squirrels, which can weigh several pounds, appear in various color phases.

Think of the fox squirrel as the Incredible Hulk of the more than half-dozen species of North American tree squirrels. It is much larger than the better-known eastern gray squirrel, weighing up to 3 pounds. It comes in a wide range of color phases—not bright green, of course, but red, brown, gray, black, and a German shepherd-like mix of all of the above. And, alas, like of Hulk himself, the fox squirrel isn't the sharpest pencil in the box. Which makes the critter that much more fun to hunt.

→ **HERE THEY COME** There are two separate populations, the midwestern fox squirrel and the southeastern fox squirrel, whose large size allows it to strip longleaf pine cones of their seeds. Both populations are expanding their range, but the midwestern fox squirrels are really on the move. Found from the Ohio Valley to Oklahoma, they are pushing south into the western North Carolina mountains and east of Pennsylvania's Allegheny Front. They're also

expanding along cottonwood-clad riverways through Colorado and New Mexico.

→ **OUT IN THE OPEN** Fox squirrels prefer more open woods than grays, and are most abundant where mature scattered oaks and pines provide plenty of nesting cavities. Farm country is perfect. They like fence posts and open woodlots, and light cattle grazing that keeps the understory trimmed down. And they can't stay out of a

cornfield, traveling up to 200 yards to snack on a cob.

→ **SNEAK ATTACK** Fox squirrels are a rimfire sniper's dream. They are active later in the day than gray squirrels, and they spend more time on or near the ground than in treetops. The perfect spot-and-stalk days come after a heavy dew or frost or during a cool, light drizzle. Squirrels will be on the move to feed, and you can stalk silently to close the distance. If you

spook one, hang tight. Fox squirrels are less wary than gray squirrels and often reappear after a quick check of their surroundings.

→ **STAY LEGAL** Before you go hunting in fox squirrel country, check regulations carefully. Fox squirrels breed earlier than grays and are often less numerous, so many states close the fox squirrel season as much as two months earlier than the gray squirrel season and have tighter bag limits.

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## 18 FIELD & STREAM WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS TELL THEIR FINEST TALES

EVERYONE LOVES A STORY. BUT AS OUTDOORSMEN, WE APPRECIATE A GOOD ONE MORE THAN MOST. We'll let you get away with the yarn about the trout that took you into the backing—even though the fish gains a pound with every retelling. We'll still act surprised that the buck you'd been chasing for ages suddenly appeared in the last minute of the last day—even though we already know the ending. We'll happily listen, and as soon as you're finished, we'll tell one of our own. • A wonderful thing about hunting and fishing is how, if you spend enough time in the wild, stories will find you. We keep them, share them, and savor them when we can't be in the field. This month, between seasons, is one of those times. So we asked our best writers and wildlife photographers for the tales that they tell when they're sitting by the fire with other outdoorsmen. Most were inspired by a list of one-word themes we provided them, because the best hunts and most memorable fish teach us something about who we are and how to live life. Other stories included show the small moments that capture the friendships, humor, and joy of the outdoors. All of the stories are wild and great. So find a comfortable chair. And escape.

# REGRET

BY SCOTT BESTUL

The skull looks a century old, even though it was pulled from an Iowa creek bed just six winters ago. The rack is stained orange by mud and black by water. There's a deep muskrat chew in the fourth tine on the right. The bones of the face are like ocher rawhide. The teeth bring to mind an old river rat I knew—a man who slept with a chaw of Red Man in his mouth. When I tip the skull, sand, grit, and little white beads of bone rattle in the cavities and spill on my shirt.

I put this buck—probably the only net Boone and Crockett typical I'll ever see within bow range—in that creek bed, and the knowledge of it has gnawed at me since.

I'd drawn a coveted Iowa bow tag, and my friend Steve invited me to hunt the sprawling property he manages for big whitetails. There was one little catch. Steve asked if I'd mind having a young Missourian named Jason film my hunt for a TV show. I'd done some video work in the past and had largely foresworn doing so again. But it seemed like a pittance to pay for access to some of the best whitetail real estate on the planet.

Jason and I gelled immediately. After four days of great action, we followed our headlamp beams to a new double-stand set, climbed up a pair of nestling white oaks, and pulled on warm layers as stars blinked between wispy, tailing clouds.

Hunting whitetails in Iowa is odd. You can sit waiting for the sun and feel no different than if you'd hung your stand in, say, Vermont. Then the first rays reach out and light up a thigh-thick cedar that looks like it was barked by a chain saw. I was staring at such a rub when I heard a plodding shuffle. Through the brush, too yards away, I couldn't see antlers—just a steer-size body walking out of my life. I hit the rattling horns and he turned.

When a mature buck comes to rattling, he resembles a strutting tom turkey, looking

larger than life, with hairs bristled on the flanks, neck, and spine. And if in this state his antlers still look huge, I skip the mental measuring tape and reach for my bow. I was clipping the release onto the bowstring when someone whispered, "I've got him." Startled, I glanced over to see a young man staring into a monstrous black thing. Since I'd first spotted the buck, Jason and his camera had vanished from my world.

I got my feet into position and drew back as the buck stiff-legged it to 20 yards. And right then, in a moment full of promise and adrenaline, I choked. I opened my mouth to grunt the walking buck to a stop, but nothing came out. Instead of regrouping, I panicked, punching the trigger as my sight pin hit the buck's shoulder. The arrow flew high and back. For a nanosecond I was sure I'd whiffed. Then the broadhead struck the buck's spine with a crack that dropped him where he stood. I'd just made a god-awful shot and, it appeared, been granted not only a pardon, but a Booner.

"Back to me! Back to me!" I heard Jason whisper excitedly. Suddenly aware of the camera again, I remembered that I was supposed to face the lens and give an interview that captured my excitement. I recall mumbling something inane. I think I also laughed, and maybe cried. I know I wiped a lot of stuff from my nose and the corners of my mouth.

Jason was giving me a thumbs-up when I heard leaves rustle near the buck. I snapped

my head around in time to see one back leg twitch, then settle. Although I'd never spined a deer before, I knew that a finishing shot was in order. But brush was in the way. "I'm climbing down to finish him," I whispered to Jason fiercely and began tying a rope to my bow's upper limb. My foot was dropping down to a tree step when he said, "Stay put. That deer isn't going anywhere"—explaining that he needed to film re-creates while we had the same exact light as when I took the shot.

This was the moment, I realize now, when everything went to hell.

I avoid conflict. Always have. Since boyhood, I've been praised for my easygoing personality, my ability to get along with everybody. But my go-along-to-get-along nature is both my asset and my curse. Every vein pumping blood to my predator brain told me to climb down and make the coup de grâce, but I couldn't force my feet down to the tree steps. I'd agreed to be filmed.

While I was mimicking my brief rattling sequence, the buck's legs shuffled again. For a moment I had a shot. As I reached for my bow, his head was up slightly, his back legs twitching. Then the buck exhaled heavily, laid his head down, and was still. "He's dead," I heard Jason say, and I talked myself into agreeing. "Give me three more quick cur-aways, and we'll go down and look at him." I stared long and hard at the buck and, seeing no movement, nodded my head.

I was drawing on an imaginary deer when the real buck started thrashing. I'd had enough. Jason was saying something to me as I lowered my bow and started down the tree, but I ignored him. When my boots hit the ground, I saw the buck make his feet, drag himself two body lengths uphill, then collapse. By the time I'd nocked an arrow, he'd risen and was staring at me. I shot through the only opening I could see, but the arrow deflected. Motivated, the buck dragged himself 10 yards, collapsed, and rose again. I nocked another arrow and walked at him, but he covered another 15 yards before sagging against a tree that blocked any shot.

Slipping closer, I saw an opening just as

"AND RIGHT THEN, IN A MOMENT FULL OF PROMISE AND ADRENALINE, I CHOKED. I OPENED MY MOUTH TO GRUNT THE WALKING BUCK TO A STOP, BUT NOTHING CAME OUT. INSTEAD OF REGROUPING, I PANICKED."



*Tough Totem*

This huge rack and stained skull was pulled from a creek bed two months after the author arrowed the buck.

he struggled to his feet again. He made it 30 more yards before I could anchor; he stopped to look at me at full draw. My arrow flew just under his chest. The buck's hind-quarters sagged as he tried to stay erect. I glanced at my quiver. One arrow left.

I rushed the deer. He made the field, pushing himself forward with just his hind legs and, when those failed, pulling himself with his forelegs. I trotted after him, struggling to keep him in sight. I lost him for a second as he hit the opposite wood line. But spotting him bedded again, I felt relief—until I realized where he lay: at the edge of a steep bank that dropped off to a creek bed. One lunge would put him over the edge.

I breathed deeply, focused, and lined up the 50-yard shot. The arrow looked perfect, arcing toward the buck's chest as he heaved himself over the embankment. I ran to the dropoff, expecting to see him dead in the bottom. But he was gone. We looked for hours. It was as if, in regaining his feet, the buck had also found wings.

**"THE ARROW LOOKED PERFECT, ARCING TOWARD THE BUCK'S CHEST AS HE HEAVED HIMSELF OVER THE EMBANKMENT. I RAN TO THE DROPOFF, EXPECTING TO SEE HIM DEAD IN THE BOTTOM. BUT HE WAS GONE."**

Two months later, while trapping muskrat along the same creek on a bleak January day, Steve's son Isaac found the grim skeleton of a monstrous 10-point buck, half buried in the sand. He and Steve knew exactly what deer it was. Not long afterward, I held the weathered skull in my hands, just like I am holding it now—and the feeling is the same.

In a crystalline moment on a November morning, I knew exactly the right thing to do. And with an animal struggling, I failed. It's not like I don't have other failures, but those have no totems to burn them in. If I were a bigger man, I'd bleach the skull, clean up the antlers, and hang this magnificent buck on the wall with all the others just outside this dim little room. Instead, I put the skull back on the cluttered workbench near the bins of dirty laundry—and close the door behind me.



## MY BIG BEAR SCARE

By John Merwin

**X The Brooks River** in Alaska's Katmai National Park and Preserve is justly famous for the many brown bears that concentrate there to feast on sockeye salmon each fall. You've probably seen photos of bears catching salmon at the Brooks's low falls in *National Geographic* and elsewhere. It was because of those bears that I had one of my life's greatest frights, although not how you might expect.

I had taken a floatplane to fish for the river's numerous big rainbows. The trout hung in the current below shoals of sockeyes and were relatively easy to catch.

Each side of the river was deeply rutted by bear paths. My guide told me that if a bear came along, we should wade across the river. So when a bear came ambulating down our side, we waded across to avoid it. When another came down that side, we waded again. After a while, we saw a bear on each bank, so we waded to the middle of the river as they went by.

Eventually, I was concentrating on a pod of rainbows near the river's edge and

looked up into the biggest pair of brown eyes imaginable. The bear was just sitting there 10 feet away, seemingly waiting for me to get out of its way. So I did.

By the end of the day, I was a nervous wreck from dodging bears and trying to fish at the same time. We had no close calls, but being around so many huge bears in the wild just got to me.

On the way home, I stopped at an Anchorage department store for souvenirs. I was looking into a glass-topped counter and walking slowly backward when I bumped into something. Turning to look, I screamed out loud.

A full-size, standing bear mount in a glass case was "snarling" at me, with paws extended. All I saw was claws and teeth. A clerk came running over, asking if I was O.K. I mumbled something about yes, thanks, and sorry and all that. I wanted to crawl into a hole in the floor.

Finally made it to the airport, grateful to be heading back home. And to this day, I don't much care if I never see another brown bear again.

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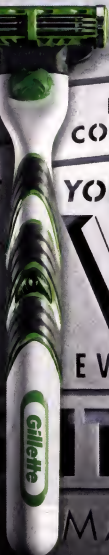
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# MORTALITY

BY THOMAS MCINTYRE

**T**he yellow gravel road turned on itself, switching back up the escarpment. Rotting snow began to bank along the sides, the melt running down. The Land Cruiser, shiny black at first light in the town and in the village where the pavement still ran and where we stopped for eight-treasure tea, was now powdered with yellow and, as the road grew wet, was becoming mud splattered. It climbed the road steeply, engine revving, and the gravel crunched wetly under the tires. Finally, at the top of the plateau where the March Qinghai sky was shattered blue was a green sign with white numerals, showing more than 4,500 meters of elevation. I gestured to the driver to stop, and I got out with the interpreter to take pictures. The old man stayed in the vehicle.

I gave the camera to the interpreter, and I stood with the sign behind me. The interpreter snapped three photos. He handed the camera back. I nodded and said, "Xie xie."  
 "'Thank you.' Yes," the interpreter said, as if I were an apt pupil. We got back into the SUV. The old man, silent for many miles, stared out the passenger-side rear window.

"It's not here," he said.

I turned in the front passenger's seat to look at him. The night's bourbon still weighed on him; and he wore sunglasses, so I could not see his eyes but I could see two deep furrows between his brows. His hat was the felt one he'd had for a half century and had once dabbled with fresh elephant blood. I'd seen that hat with an orange cover when I was 20 years old as he laid it on the ground on the Roan Cliffs beside his .300 and opened his Case knife to dress a 4x4. I'd seen it long before that in San Joaquin Valley dove fields and out among the Joshua trees in the desert by the ghost mining towns where we'd shot jackrabbits when my father did not go. And



he wore it two days ago as we drove to see the Great Wall, and again he stayed in the car.

"What's not here?" I asked the old man.

"My rifle," he said. "I left it farther back."

"Farther back where?" I asked. "It's still in the gun case in the rear."

"No," he said, recalling another place from a lifetime of hunting. "It must be somewhere. Else. I must..." He stopped.

The driver did not speak English and the

interpreter did not quite understand, and for a long time no one said anything in the car.

A military-olive truck met us late in the day, and we crossed country without any roads and only a visible two-track over the steppes, skirting a blue lake with broken ice and waterbirds, and here and there on the plateau, distantly separated, a house surrounded by walls made from sun-dried earth.

At last light we came to the camp of three

yurts and a kitchen tent, surrounded by stony summits. Along with the Chinese camp manager were two Tibetan girls who did the housekeeping. They were tall and slender, with anhracite black hair and white, white teeth. One was named Spring Flower. They draped white silk *hadass* around our necks. And there was one more Chinese man who did mechanical work and tended trophies.

A Texas hunter and his wife were already in camp. He said he had taken an exceptional Tibetan gazelle but had not seen a blue sheep he wanted. He was packing to leave in the morning, and on his folding bed I saw some 20 empty cartridge cases in a pile.

When I went into my yurt, the old man was sitting up in his bed under the woolen blankets, his breathing like a ragged bellows. He asked if there were oxygen tanks in the camp, and for the doctor. I went out and told the interpreter. He came back with the mechanic, now in a long white coat and a white hat like a chef's toque. They stood on the carpet covering the ground, and the interpreter listened to the old man and talked with the handyman-physician who nodded, then went out. The interpreter patted the shoulder of the old man, who jerked because he hated being touched, and told him to rest. Before I lay down, I said that maybe he should drive out in the morning with the Texas hunter and his wife and get to a lower elevation. He didn't answer, or maybe I didn't hear.

The next morning, headachy from altitude, I sighted in my '06 on a cardboard box with a black cross inked on the upturned bottom. I took a picture of the old man with his new silk scarf and then shook hands, though I don't know if he remembered.

Miles from camp on the snow-patched yellow steppe, gazelles ran in slanting herds, fleeing when they saw us approach from a half mile away. We drove and spotted for hours, until a very good lone buck with ribbed black twinned S's curling back on its head stood for us at 300 yards. I was out quickly, uncasing my '06 and opening the bolt. I sat away from the vehicle and chambered a round. The buck vanished straight down with the shot.

Tomorrow it would be real hunting, riding ponies with the herdsmen onto the summits to look for blue sheep scattered among the rocks. The old man, too old for car hunting, was far too old for that. He had come here for one final journey to a place he'd never been for game he'd never hunted. But he'd come too old, I thought, this man who had known me since I was born, not considering, at the time, that someday I too would be too old.

When I returned with the gazelle, the black Land Cruiser was gone. Now there was an extra tag in camp.



## MY HIGHER CALLING

By Phil Bourjaily

**X Let's be honest:** I can blow a duck call until help arrives and that's about it. But in one small corner of North Dakota, I am a legend.

Years ago, Winchester invited me and 29 other writers to Bismarck for the introduction of a new semiauto shotgun. Every morning, they split up and scattered us across the state to hunt with guides and locals. One foggy morning found three of us spread out along a brushy fenceline shooting Canada geese. Our guides were four carpet layers who loved to hunt honkers but never shot ducks.

In fact, they'd never even heard a duck call. When I broke out mine to work a flock of mallards that appeared out of the gloom, they were amazed. I don't know if they were more surprised that I could talk to ducks or that anyone would want to.

Those mallards never quite committed, but the geese decoyed perfectly that morning. I shot a limit and then sat down at the edge of the field to enjoy the hunt, done shooting but with my gun loaded in case the mallards returned.

The head carpet layer came over.

"You can shoot my limit," he said.

"No thanks," I said. "I'm done."

"I want you to shoot my birds."

"That's O.K.," I said. "Three geese is enough for me."

"No. Shoot my limit."

Pretty soon we were standing up, arguing. It wasn't quite heated but it was weird. Neither of us was backing down. Finally I said, "Look, this has been great. I killed a limit of geese. I'm happy. What I want to do now is shoot a duck."

As if on cue we heard the faint quack of a mallard hen looking for company in the fog. I blew a little hail call. You could hear the duck's quacks grow louder as she turned our way, thinking she'd found a friend. Right over our heads, the mallard flew out of the fog. I raised my gun, and the bird tumbled to our feet. Taking a half step, I picked it up.

The head carpet layer stared at me like I was a witch.

"There," I said. "I've shot a duck. Now I can go home."



# PERSISTENCE

BY DAVID E. PETZAL

Long, long ago I learned about the Code of the West, a hard and pitiless creed that governed the lives of cowboys, mountain men, trappers, and frontiersmen of all stripes. It stipulates among other things that you don't draw against a stranger, beat your horse excessively, or burst into tears and quit if things aren't going your way.

I subscribe wholeheartedly to the Code and got my chance to honor its precepts on an elk hunt that took place near Cody, Wyo., in the mid 1990s. Winchester sponsored the affair, transporting a gaggle of gun writers west to hunt antelope, mule deer, and elk. Of the dozen or so persons involved, however, I was one of only two to draw an elk tag, which placed a heavy obligation on me.

Having terminated the furtive existences of the mule deer and antelope, my guide and

I traveled to either the Absaroka or the Big Horn Mountains (I can't remember which) to do the same to an elk. Said guide was a very young man named Steve Dube, son of a famous outfitter named Ron Dube. Steve was not only young; he was tough as a boiled owl.

My horse for the day was a chestnut gelding named Trooper, who distinguished himself that morning by farting nonstop most of the way up the mountain. It was a breathtaking exhibition of equine flatulence. The mountain itself was covered with loose volcanic rock of all sizes. This made for bad footing under normal circumstances, and on this day the ground was covered with snow, making things especially treacherous.

We were riding at the edge of a basin, and Steve warned me to kick my boots free of the stirrups, because if Trooper slipped, I was going to have to get clear of him fast. No sooner had I done this than Trooper's legs went out from under him. He flopped on his side, fighting to keep from taking the Big

Slide, while I fought to keep clear of Trooper.

I was mostly successful, but at some point my face and one of his hooves tried to occupy the same space at the same time. My teeth were driven through my cheek under my lower lip, and I got the best bloody nose of my career. But I was lucky. I didn't have any teeth knocked out and my nose was unbroken, although it was pumping blood with great vigor.

Trooper and I stood up, and you could tell us apart because he had four legs and I had blood all over me. Now at this point you might expect Steve to say, "Are you all right?"

Instead, because he believed in the Code, he said: "You're gonna have to get back on him."

Because I subscribe to the Code, I said: "Don't worry, I'm not hiking up this goddamn mountain."

Trooper, perhaps out of sympathy, stopped farting.

And so up the mountain we rode.

When we got to the top, we found not even a trace of elk, and snow so deep and hard

## MY LAST CIGARETTE

By Will Ryan

**I loved to smoke.** Even now, long after stopping, I like standing next to people who do, and are.

As I neared 30, the pressure to quit increased, particularly from the people in my life. My canned response was that I needed to experience personally one of smoking's hazards. Then I'd be motivated.

I was living in northern Vermont then, and sometimes my buddies and I would use pike-size bait and target the big browns in the Lamolle River. So one morning, after an all-night rain, my buddy Ted and I decided to hit a stretch of water where we'd seen a big fish crashing shiners. We stopped at a beaver pond on the way, caught some creek chubs for bait and, as the sun touched the treetops, took up stations 100 yards apart. I hooked a 6-inch through

the lips and tossed it out. A trout was a flank the size of a canoe paddle hit my chub as if we were feeding time at the aquarium. I flipped the bail and let him run. This fish was probably 8 to 10 pounds. I can still see the yellow flash of his sides in the murky water.

In those days, whenever I was fishing bait for pike and big trout and had a hit, I'd smoke a cigarette before setting the hook. That way I wouldn't strike too soon and snatch the bait out of the fish's mouth. So I reached for a Winston and, with the line whispering out through the guides, lit up. The fish headed across the river, over a ledge, and into deep water. The line stopped. I blew out a long rich cloud and admired it.

A few minutes later I was past the ink on the cigarette's wrapper and the torch on the end looked as if it had been passed through the entire boy's room. Go time. I closed the bail and flicked the butt out into the river. It got there, but not before zipping through the 10-pound-test, leaving me with nothing but 5 feet of mono floating on the morning breeze.



crusted that the horses simply quit on us—groaning and refusing to budge. So Steve and I dismounted and broke trail until we found a way down the mountain.

By the time we got back to the corral it was late afternoon. We unsaddled the horses, and the last time I saw Trooper he had his head shoved in the alfalfa, working up a fresh load of flatulence.

At this point we might have called it a day, but the Code of the West dictated otherwise, and Steve knew where there was a sagebrush flat where bull elk sometimes came out to view the sunset.

Off we went, by truck this time, and found the flat with perhaps five minutes of shooting time left. To get from the road to the flat, however, we would have to climb nearly straight up for 25 yards through a snowbank that was at least 5 feet deep. Steve volunteered to go first and take a look since I was older and busy leaking blood.

The snow was well above Steve's waist, but he made it, and then he leaned over the edge of the bank and looked down at me with an expression of pure joy. *Come on, he semaphored, there's an elk out there.*

Figuring this was as good a place as any to have a heart attack, I wallowed to the top through snow that seemed to come up under my chin, and there, far, far away under the failing light, was a bull elk.

I got in the prone position, held above the elk's back, and started shooting. The bull took a few tentative steps forward and collapsed. I used up 15 years' worth of hunting luck right then and there. Because the snow was so deep and we could not accurately count paces, there was no way to tell how far off he actually was—certainly over 400 yards. But in real-life elk hunting, if you get a chance you take it, because it's the only chance you're going to get.

Next day we went up and collected him. He was an average 5x5, but as the title of a story that ran in *FIELD & STREAM* years ago said, "Any elk is a good elk."

\*\*\*

Outside Cody, there is a reconstructed frontier town consisting of ancient shacks, shanties, and hovels scrounged from all over the state. In that town is the grave of Jonathan Johnson, the model for Jeremiah Johnson, and on his grave marker is the legend NO MORE TRAILS.

You and I will come to the place where there are no more trails, and before you do, I hope you have at least one hunt like this one, when everything looks hopeless and yet you succeed against the wildest odds. You can do it, even when it seems crazy to go on—provided you abide by the Code of the West.



## MY WILDEST RIDE

By T. Edward Nickens

**X** When the railcar doors screeched open the sound was like banshees screaming in the dark. I looked out the yawning maw of the cargo door and there it was: Nothing. Black dark. A million miles of it, give or take, unfurled beyond the railroad tracks and into the great roadless wilderness of northern Ontario. I've found a bunch of ways to get into wild country—hiking boots, jacked-up trucks, antique airplanes, more paddles than I can count—but getting to the back of beyond by railroad, with my canoe and gear stacked up in a freight car, has to be the wildest. For \$50, Via Rail Canada agreed to schlep my canoe across thousands of miles, and stop at any godforsaken waterway or portage trail along the line.

It was 2 A.M. when the conductor woke us. After an hours-long train ride, four of us had 15 frantic minutes to collect our gear and wits, then we piled out of the freight car like adrenaline-fueled paratroopers. Trainmen hurled our packs and paddles and rods and boats out of the

cargo door. Nobody said a word. It was weird, like they weren't sure if we were crazy or just plain stupid to jump ship in the middle of the night, in the middle of Ontario's boreal forest. As the train disappeared in the dark, we stood sleepily on a rocky little knoll surrounded by the Missinabi River marshes.

Getting there by train felt like channeling some Arlo Guthrie hobo. And it felt a bit like cheating—like we took a shortcut to wilderness. But what a payoff. For six days we didn't see another human—and we nearly sunk the boat with walleyes.

Hopping a train to wild country magnifies each aspect of why we head to wilderness in the first place. You stand there until the train lights disappear in the dark, and the thrumming, vibrating rails go silent. There's no turning around. It is an exhilarating feeling that ushers in a powerful sense of freedom. From now on, it's what you have and what you know. There's a boat beside the tracks. There's water under the trestle. And down there, somewhere, is the adventure.

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# REDEMPTION

BY ANTHONY LICATA

**M**y instinct was telling me not to pull the trigger, but the guide was hissing shoot, and I could feel the eyes of seven guys behind me, surely asking what was taking me so long.

I was five minutes into an elk hunt in eastern Oregon. The plan was for two guides in two trucks to drop the hunters off where we could hike and glass, looking for elk moving through the country. But as soon as we pulled onto the ranch, David, the guide, barked, "Get out!" In seconds I was on shooting sticks, the crosshairs of my scope wobbling over the chest of a bull standing in dark timber 280 yards up a steep hill.

"He's a good bull," David said. "Shoot."

Here's the thing: I didn't care if it was a record-book bull; I didn't want to shoot. I was excited about a weeklong hunt in the mountains, and I didn't want it to be over before it started. But more important, jumping out of the truck and shooting a bull before I got my boots dirty is not how I wanted to kill my first elk—or any elk.

I've been on horse-pack wilderness hunts, and also big-game hunts where I spent a fair amount of time looking through a windshield. I sit in a vehicle plenty in my everyday life, so I'd always rather hike the backcountry if I can. I've hunted the West enough, however, to know that in big, open country, a four-wheel-drive rig is often the best way to cover the vast terrain. I've had some great hunts that followed the common scenario of spotting a distant animal from the truck, bailing out, and making a stalk. Nothing wrong with that.

What does feel wrong is killing an animal before I've gotten a chance to know the country. I want to climb mountains and hike through timber. I want to see not only the game I'm hunting but the birds and trees and all of the animals and plants that make a place

unique. I want to sweat and work and cope with the mountains and forests where my quarry lives, even if I'm just a brief visitor.

So far the only thing I'd done on this hunt was not spill my coffee. I stalled, hoping the bull would bolt. He stayed put. I don't remember deciding to shoot, but the rifle recoiled, and the bull whined and disappeared.

The whispering from the gallery behind me said it was a clean miss.

I wished I could share their opinion but knew it was worse. When the trigger broke, I was sure of where the crosshairs were: on the chest but a touch back and way too high.

I found half a dozen small spots of bright blood. That was all, however, and after 500 yards we lost the track. We hiked all over the ranch and the adjacent national forest trying to catch up with the herd, but we saw no sign.

"Elk have a big no-man's land between their lungs and backbone," David told me. "The bullet'll poke right through that spot, and that bull will be just fine. Believe me."

*Yeah right.* He was a guide trying to make his hunter feel better, but that night I lay in bed feeling worse. I inherited a deeply superstitious nature from my Sicilian ancestors, but whereas they wore charms to ward off the evil eye, I mostly focus on not doing anything that will draw a curse from the hunting gods. People look at you funny when you're superstitious, so I don't talk about it much, but to me it's very real and can be summed up like this: Hunt with a respectful attitude, honor the animal and the place, and do things the right way, and you will be rewarded. Get greedy, care more about yourself than your prey, and you will be punished. And that morning I had bowed to peer pressure and shot an animal I didn't want to kill—a cardinal sin in my book.

I spent the next two days with no thoughts of shooting another elk. I was happy to go along with the other hunters. We still hunted through the dark timber of the national forest. We climbed sage-covered hills. We spent hours glassing the spectacular landscape.

On the third day, David and I dropped off some hunters, then hiked a ridge that over-

looked a vast canyon. We hoped to locate a herd and get a few hunters in place for a stalk. We were nearing the point when David said, "There they are," and dropped to his knees.

Sixty head of elk were streaming over the ridge to our west and into the canyon below us. In the mix was a fine bull, herding his cows and bugging with a raspy scream.

In a crouch, we ran to the rim and set up. They were going to cross 80 yards below us, and I was ready. But the wind was wrong, and when the lead cow drew in line with us, she stopped as if running into a wall, and the herd turned and bolted for the high country.

I ran to cut them off and dropped to one knee 100 yards from where the first elk were already boiling out of the canyon. They crossed 15 yards of open space before disappearing into the timber above.

When the herd bull came out, I only had a couple of seconds to put the crosshairs where his chocolate mane met his tawny body and pull the trigger. The lead was perfect, and he tumbled over in midstride, a bullet hole right behind his shoulder.

I'll admit it: I felt great. I was thrilled with the bull, proud of the shot, and most of all, deeply satisfied with the hunt. Then I thought of the bull that I had wounded and my bad decision that was responsible for crippling him, and it cast a shadow over my smile.

David and I touched up our knives and started butchering, working slowly and stopping often to talk about details of the hunt: the size of the herd, how they poured down the ridge like a river, how powerful the bull looked and how much his bugging echoed across the canyon. Once we had freed the hide from the neck and legs, we pulled it off the carcass, and David said, "Sonofagun, I don't believe it." He gestured with the point of his blade. A small bullet hole, fresh and now leaking a few drops of blood, poked through the bull's torso, a touch back and way too high. He smiled and said, "Told you that bull would be fine."

Staring at the second chance that lay at my feet, the only thing I could think to say was "Thank you."





## TROUBLE

BY MIKE TOTI

**T**his was 25 years ago, when I'd moved to Georgia for a new job. By coincidence, a guy I knew who hunted land bordering the Pennsylvania property I hunted had moved there about a year earlier. When a couple of Yankee hunters find each other deep in Dixie, they become friends quickly, as Tom and I did.

Tom worked at the big Lockheed plant outside of Atlanta and had met a few hunters there. One of them, a guy named Brad, lived out near the Alabama border, an hour-plus drive southwest of the city. Rural Georgia.

Brad told Tom that his family had property with a lot of turkeys on it, and we could hunt it if we wanted to. So one afternoon in March, Tom and I drive out to scout it.

We have a handwritten map and directions from Brad to a stretch of woods along a two-lane road. We park, go in, and immediately find turkey sign. Tracks, droppings, and feathers are everywhere. We even hear some birds. We don't want to spook any, so we quickly mark a place near a roost tree to set up for opening morning and get out of there.

Boy, we are pumped. *Georgia gobblers! On private land!*

Tom picks me up at 3:30 A.M. on the opener a week later, and we get to the property way before sunup. We walk in, get settled, and start calling in the predawn. For about an hour we have a flock around us, but nothing comes close. We decide to walk back to the truck for coffee and to plan the rest of the morning.

We're heading up the slope to the road when I see a thin man wearing a pressed khaki uniform taking a leak at the edge of the woods. "Warden," I tell Tom. We stop, look at each other, shrug, and walk toward him. After all, we're not doing anything wrong.

If only I had known.

"Licenses," the warden says as he leads us

back to the truck. Tom and I open our wallets and hand them over. He's agitated and I can't figure out why. He gives the licenses back to us and says, "You're on private property!"

"We know," says Tom. "We have permission." He tells the warden about Brad.

"This isn't his property!" the warden says.

"Yes it is," says Tom. He goes to the truck—which, I realize uneasily, still has a Pennsylvania license plate on it—and gets the directions. "See? Brad said—"

"It's not his land!" the warden says, hotly.

"So whose land is it?"

"It's my land!"

The three of us get into a heated discussion about why we thought we were on the correct property, the state's posting laws, and the lack of posted signs on the land, but at the end we say O.K., if we made a mistake, we'll leave.

The warden has other ideas. He writes out tickets and says we can settle right there by paying him the fines, which come to more than \$200. Tom and I have about \$17.

"Get in your truck and follow me," says the warden. Ten minutes later we're at what appears to be a large police station. We follow the warden inside, where he has a quiet conversation with two officers.

One of the cops walks up to us and says, "Empty your pockets. Take your belts off. Turn around, feet apart, hands against the wall." Shocked, we do so. We get patted down and are led to a jail cell. A thick metal door slams shut on us.

We're in jail. In the deep South. With our broad, nasal northern accents and our truck with the name of a faraway state on the tag. And no one knows we're here.

"I can't believe this!" says Tom, pacing back and forth in front of the stainless-steel, seatless toilet. "This is bulls--t! How long can they keep us here? How do we get out?"

"I don't know," I say. I look through the tiny window where an officer is sitting at a desk. I pound the door. "Phone call! We're allowed one phone call!" He ignores me.

Half an hour later the cell door opens and

an elderly man in an orange jumpsuit passes us foam boxes containing beans and a very red hot dog. A smiley face and the words HAVE A NICE DAY are embossed on the lid.

Soon after that an officer opens the door. "Follow me," he says. Soon we're getting our front and profile photos taken. I still have cameo paint on my face. I feel ridiculous.

The officer eventually lets us use the phone, but we can't reach anyone in Atlanta. In desperation I tell the officer I'll give him my ATM card and tell him my PIN if he'll go get cash. "I can't do that," he says.

"So what can we do?"

"Well, there's a bail bondsman in town. Here's his number."

I get on the phone with the bondsman, explain our situation, and tell him how much cash we have on hand, which isn't even enough to cover his fee. "Sounds like you boys are in a bit of a bind," he says.

"How about our guns?" I ask him. "Can you take them as collateral?"

"What kind are they?"

"A Winchester 1200 and—hey Tom! What do you shoot?—and a Remington 870."

The bondsman, an elderly white-haired man, arrives an hour later. I watch as he jokes with one of the officers. Our cell door opens. We get our personal effects and walk out. The bondsman puts his arm around my shoulders and says, "Here's my card. If you ever find yourself in a bind in Atlanta, call me."

I'm insulted at first, but then I see myself from his perspective: the type of guy who gets into trouble.

Months later, Tom and I pay our fines, pay the bondsman, and get our guns back. We found out that the warden was a member of a club that hunted that property. The members were voluntarily not hunting turkeys in order to let the flock propagate. We also discovered that Brad and the warden knew each other—and didn't care for one another. Brad became scarce, so I never learned why he'd sent us there.

I carry my own up-to-date, well-marked maps now whenever I hunt. Along with some extra cash in my wallet. Just in case.



## PICTURE THIS



### AIRBORNE

Photograph by Tim Romano

✱ Last summer I traveled to Alaska and fished out of Bristol Bay Lodge. We were a couple of miles from the Bering Sea on an unnamed river at a remote spur camp, chasing silver salmon. I wanted to check the species off my bucket list. We worked really hard all day for the silvers, and we each caught one. That was a special fish for me.

Our guide, Tyler, was filleting my fish when he told me to get out the camera. He wouldn't say why—only that he had a surprise. After I was ready, he whistled and out of nowhere this long-tailed jaeger appeared and just hovered over Tyler. He threw some of the salmon eggs from my fish, and the bird ate them in the air. It circled back many times, eating more eggs and innards—at times right out of Tyler's hand.

Tyler told me that the jaeger has been at the same spot for a couple of years now and knows Tyler by sight. The guides call the bird Scrappy.



### AWESTRUCK

Photograph by Dušan Smetana

✱ We were in South Dakota, hunting pheasants and Hungarian partridge. The sky was overcast, and as the afternoon wore on we saw prairie lightning in the distance. Black clouds rolled toward us across darkening plains. Sheets of rain were slanting low and electricity hung in the air. "Time to get back," one of my friends said. I gauged the movement of the clouds and sun, and the photographer-dictator in me came out. "No, not possible!" I shouted. "We're staying!" The rain swept toward us and so did the light, illuminating every drop. It created this towering double rainbow. We stood underneath it and were engulfed in repeats of thunder—and after each crack came this new disembodied, magical sound in response. At first none of us knew what this sound was or where it was coming from, but as we stood there we realized that hundreds of unseen rooster pheasants were answering the thunder. We were frozen; delighted in the moment, feeling that this might never come in our lives again.

FROM TOP: TIM ROMANO; DUŠAN SMETANA



### MY 9/11 WILDERNESS TRIP

By Bob Marshall

✱ We came across the three Swiss hikers on the second leg of our 12-day backpacking fishing trip along the Highline Trail in Wyoming's Bridger Wilderness. We were heading in as they were heading out. It was Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2001. So a thought occurred to me.

"How long have you been in?" I asked. The tallest of the three men answered in German-accented English. "Ten days," he said. "We see no one else."

Quickly I counted backward and came to Sept. 9—two days before 9/11. Two days before airliners flew into the World Trade Center towers, before the word *horror* took on new meaning, and before everything I thought about the future had to be amended.

I searched his face for any reaction, saw none, and asked, "Then you don't know about the terrorists, do you?"

His puzzled look was answer enough. As I tried to explain the events of that awful day, watching their faces was like live-viewing a replay of our own reactions to

the unspeakable atrocity as it unfolded. Confusion to disbelief to horror—and back to disbelief.

All of which convinced me, again, why I needed to be there in the wilderness.

The line between sublimity and sadness is often razor-thin, like being on opposing teams during a walk-off home run. You can be sky-high one second, a mile deep the next. And it's difficult to recover from the emotional plunge.

That's where sportsmen have the advantage. We know where healing awaits. For me the surest, quickest cure has always begun at any sign announcing the boundary to a wilderness area—a place where man is only a visitor. The moment I step across that line I feel worries that seemed important a day ago begin to melt away. I may be carrying 45 pounds on my back, but somehow my step is lighter.

Long before the trip ended, nature had restored some certainty and balance to our lives. The world had not healed when we rejoined it 12 days later, but I felt better prepared to live in it.

# Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

**CHICAGO:** A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.

**"Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry" – Dr. Babu, M.D.  
Board Certified ENT Physician**

Dr. Cherukuri knew that untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer's dementia. He could not understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones and digital cameras had fallen.

Since Medicare and most private insurance do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between \$2000-\$6000 for a pair, many of the doctor's patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri's goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, not unlike the "one-size-fits-most" reading glasses available at drug stores.

He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

## Inspiration from a surprising source

The doctor's inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell

- **Designed By A Board Certified Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Doctor**
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phone he had just purchased. "I felt that if someone could devise an affordable device like an iPhone® for about \$200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price."

## Affordable Hearing Aid With Superb Performance

The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the MDHearingAid PRO®, starting well under \$200. It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.

## Tested By Leading Doctors and Audiologists

The MDHearingAid PRO® has been rigorously tested by leading ENT physicians and audiologists who have unanimously agreed that the sound quality and output in many cases exceeds more expensive hearing aids.

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*"I have been wearing hearing aids for over 25 years and these are the best behind-the-ear aids I have tried. Their sound quality rivals that of my \$3,000 custom pair of Phonak Xtra digital ITE"* —Gerald Levy

*"I have a \$2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid PRO® in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids."* — Dr. May, ENT Physician

*"We ordered two hearing aids for my mother on Sunday, and the following Wednesday they were in our mailbox! Unbelievable! Now for the best part—they work so great, my mother says she hasn't heard so good for many years, even with her \$2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again."* —Al Peterson

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# HOPE

BY KEITH MCCAFFERTY

For the tourists who buy conch shells in the crushed-coral lot of the Southernmost Hotel, where U.S. 1 runs out of land after its 2,000-mile descent of the eastern seaboard, Key West is a party town—the end of the road in the sense that senior prom is the end of high school. It is a place where letting go begins with a beer in the Half Shell Raw Bar, pauses to take in the sunset at Mallory Square, then finds its stride in a neon careen down Duval Street to Sloppy Joe's, where Hemingway told tales and hitched his pants with anchor rope. Anything might happen from here on out. Something surely will.

For others, Key West is the end of the road in the way that the darkest bar is the end of the day. It is where shattered lives exhaust their final hours, where fortune-tellers manufacture hope for the hopeless for a \$10 bill, where men who can't recall when it all went wrong lean in 2 A.M. shadows among six-toed cats that are scarcely more than shadows themselves.

In Key West, people who would pause to consider if they were farther up U.S. 1, or farther up the ladder, don't. And those who don't smoke might just light one up.

At 5 A.M. the town is at slack tide. The shutters are drawn. The only sound is the grind of the tires as Mo and I pedal our rented bicycles up White Street. A liquid trail of Spanish beacons us toward the deli at the M&M Laundry, where we stop for Cuban sandwiches to go and shots of sweetened espresso. A feral rooster named Ernesto, his broken feathers trailing through the dust, pecks up scraps behind the kitchen.

"If you need sandwiches tomorrow morning, try the Ernesto," the man behind the counter tells us. He jabs with his chin toward the rooster and smiles under a stained mustache. "It will be tough, but good."

"Mañana," I reply, but unless a storm shuts the airport down, there will be no tomorrow

for us. This is our last day fishing the flats, and if our luck continues to hold—and it has now for 10 years—once more we will go home having failed to reach the goal that brings us back. For if Key West marks the end of the road for the young in spirit and the heaviest of heart, it is also the last stop for the intrepid angler who can't rest until he has taken all the world's great gamefish. After most fishermen have boated their first tarpon, after the bonefish has made its last run and the Atlantic salmon is hand-tailed in the gloaming of the castle ruins, the permit dangles just out of reach, flashing its mirrored sides like a tropical jewel.

Growing up to 70 pounds, permit are the largest member of the pompano family and the only one that's more famous at the end of the line than on a dinner plate. They sport large eyes and cavernous nostrils, so that what they don't spot as a phony, they sense as a counterfeiter. Not that many of them stick around long enough to inspect your offering. Permit typically spook from the boat at 100 feet, or else they scurry away the moment you lift the rod.

Mo and I have commandeered the services of Simon Becker, one of the best permit guides in the Keys. He is already at the dock by the time we've locked our bikes at Garrison Bight, a good-morning smile on his lips and two fists full of fly rods. It takes just a minute to slip the rods into the racks on his skiff and put the sandwiches on ice. Then we are idling off past the sign for the Harbor Lights Restaurant—ENTERTAINMENT, ROMANCE AND LIVE BAIT. In another minute the boat is on plane, shearing the rippled moonstone surface.

We're reserving the first two hours for tarpon, until the sun is high enough for us to be able to spot permit on the flats. Simon cuts the motor inside a necklace of mangrove islands, and I step up on the bow with the 11-weight, feeling the way a fighter must feel when he dances into the ring to face a better man. Tarpon fishing is the most masochistic experience I've had holding a rod, not because tarpon are difficult to catch but because after the first few jumps it's just your muscles against theirs, and then after a half hour or so it's your heart against theirs and a sober ques-

## PICTURE THIS



### RUSH

**Photograph by Donald M. Jones**  
 ✱ I spent nine hours photographing this bull in western Canada, and he never once showed any sign of aggression. The next day, though, the day I got this shot, he turned the switch. This was him charging me the first time. I took a few shots before I turned around and ran like hell. I spotted this partially fallen tree and figured that if I could put the trunk between us, he'd stop. And he did. After I caught my breath, I started shooting again but kept my distance. About an hour and a half after the charge, there was this perfect moment when the sun popped out and steam was rising from the ground as he sniffed along. I found a shooting lane in front of him. He took a few steps and unleashed this bugle that felt as if it went right through me. Then he charged again.

I bolted down the narrow lane but stopped after about 150 feet, because there, 30 feet in front of me, was a rag-horn bull. I turned and saw the other bull about 75 feet away, coming full bore. Oh, s---! The lane was so tight I really had nowhere to go, but I tried to flee perpendicular to the trail. I didn't go 4 feet before I slammed into a sapling and fell down. As soon as I hit the ground, I screamed. I thought the bull was going to kill me. I rolled on my back so I could be in a position to kick him. But he rushed right by me for the rarghorn.

I walked over to a log to sit and digest what'd happened. I was in so much pain. When I fell, I landed right on top of one of my cameras—and I'm a big guy, 220 pounds. My chest hurt so bad that I thought I'd broken my sternum, but the doctors would tell me later on that I'd just bruised and battered my ribs. And miraculously my camera still worked.

I went back out and photographed that bull for four more days. But, boy, I gave him plenty of space.

DONALD M. JONES

tion as to whose will give out first. Men pay \$500 a day for the pleasure.

Two hundred feet away a reptilian back arches out of the water as a tarpon gulps air, its scales reflecting the fire of the sunrise. The line pulses out and the fly falls, is pulled once...and stops. I will spare you the details. Suffice it to say there is a point early on when we are looking up at 6 feet of fish coming down, and another, seemingly moments later, when the fish is so far away that, jumping, it looks like a tangerine minnow imprinted against the mangroves. The battle is won, technically, a half hour later and a half mile away, when the leader comes back to the rod tip. But no one has told the tarpon. It wrenches its chromium-plated head and spits the fly.

I sit back, exhausted, as Simon examines the frayed shock tipper.

"That looked like more fun than eatin' ham," Mo says. But he makes no move to take the rod. He is nursing a sore back and wants no part of the brutes this morning. I work my cramped fingers and step back onto the casting platform for round two.

Mercifully, the next hour produces no tarpon. When the sun reaches a 40-degree angle, Simon pulls up a flesh-colored mask to protect his alabaster complexion and steps down from the poling platform. He flips open a page of his tide book and cocks his head an inch, which is about as expressive as he gets when making a decision.

"Permit tide?" Mo asks.

"Permit tide." Simon snaps the book shut and we are back on plane, heading for the unspoiled backcountry of the Marquesas Islands, 25 miles west.

The skiff slices panels of exquisite color: tan olive flats bisected by a jade ribbon, aquamarine shoals bordering a belt of sand bottom that seems lit from within, a brilliant swath of royal blue, the India ink depths of the Gulf. A picker line of cormorants perched on the ribs of a shipwrecked skeleton rise in an ungainly flapping. Mo points to them, but I am drifting away, reeling back through the years to a time I worked in Islamorada, farther up the chain of the Keys, where I first felt the pull of permit.

\*\*\*

That year I had managed to guide myself to both bonefish and tarpon with the aid of a johnboat and a 20-horse Evinrude that you could trust to get you somewhere, but not to bring you back. Permit were well beyond my reach, or at least I thought so until a charter-boat captain drew me a map in the Tiki Bar with fingers as blunt as robust cigars. He belonged to that class of citizens whose minds seem to go far away after each tilt of the bottle, so far that you have to tap them on the shoulder to bring them back. "Oh, sure," he said.



**Photo Finish** The author's friend Mo shows off his permit with their Key West guide Simon Becker.

"Left at the sign that says EGGS," I scribbled some more and walked to the bayfront shack I rented with the hope that if the right tide coincided with last light, X marked the spot where I might wade within reach of a tailing permit.

The directions were to a nude beach near Marathon, a fact the captain had failed to mention. A half dozen folks with skin tones ranging from newly minted to very old penny were grouped around what looked to be a waterlogged bale of hay, and which in fact was what in the drug trade they call a square grouper, a bale of marijuana washed up after being tossed from a boat. A middle-aged woman with sea oats wound into her hair departed from the group to ask me what I was doing there—a look of skepticism coming into her eyes when I mentioned the word *permit*. I had to assure her I meant a fish. The nature worshippers departed at dusk, minus the grouper, and I found what I'd come for shortly after, a forked tail coaxing me to wade deeper than I had wanted, toward a dark edge where a channel cut into the flat.

It would take me two casts to hook the fish some anglers spend a lifetime and a small fortune to never catch. The backing peeled off the reel, and when the metal core showed through I clamped down and broke the permit off. It took, maybe, a minute. It left me shaking for half an hour. I drove north on U.S. 1 a few weeks later to begin a different chapter of life, during which many different kinds of fish would come to hand, but that was as close as I ever came to catching a permit.

\*\*\*

"Mo, did I ever tell you about the time—" I begin when Simon cuts the motor.

"Yeah," he says. "Grassy Key. You hooked a bonefish and thought it was a permit."

"It was a permit."

"O.K., Keith, it was a permit. I mean, you were the only one there." He shoots Simon a wink. "Just stand back now and let me show you how it's done."

He takes the bow as Simon begins to pole along the outside lip of a 10-acre flat. Staghorn corals pass under the boat; turtle grass flows like gentle hair with the tide. We are looking

for permit leaving the interior of the flat as the current flows out, working toward deeper water. The usual suspects—stingrays, boxfish, midger barracudas, and nurse sharks—seem to be in particular abundance. Simon takes it as a good omen.

"There's a fish at 10 o'clock," he says. "About 200 feet. O.K., it's a permit. He's at 150, do you have him?"

I have him, but then I'm standing on the cooler getting a tan. There isn't any pressure on me. Mo is looking in the right direction. There was a time when both he and I would have been trying to decipher the hands of the clock at this juncture and Simon's voice would have been rising: *Not that left, your other left!* But now Mo sees him.

"He's at 80 feet. Start your cast."

It's a good cast. Mo's fly sinks to the bottom about 4 feet in front of the fish. The permit flares on, tilts its nose down.

"Strip."

The permit runs up, turns away, flashes a circle and departs, leaving a wake on the flat.

"The permit is the only fish scared of his own food," Mo says, and passes me the rod.

In the next few hours I have two shots at permit: a cruiser that I have to lead like a fast-flying duck and that actually stops a moment to consider; and the second, a big permit potted up in a small depression of the flat. I overcast him by 3 feet, causing Simon to remind me that the fish doesn't eat from that end.

It is midafternoon when we make our last stop in a cove on the backside of the Marquesas. Simon poles along a depression that worms across the flat while Mo stands on the bow, the yarn-crab fly pinched between his thumb and forefinger. The tide is almost shoo, hope going with it, when Simon quietly says the magic word. This time there isn't any frantic search to see the fish. Five permit are nose down, their forked, lipid tails out of the water, beckoning like ebony fingers.

"Don't get nervous, Mo," Mo says. Simon poles toward the fish, cutting the distance to 100 feet. A pod of tailing permit are considered to be the best prospect for a hookup, and the tension on the boat becomes palpable.

"When you're ready," Simon says.

A permit darts from the pack, picks the fly off the bottom, and drops it. Mo pulls the fly a foot. The water shivers as the fish jockey for position. He pulls again. "Got him."

A transparent sheet of water jumps up the fly line as the permit powers toward deeper water. Simon poles after it and the fight is engaged, slugged out in a channel after several unstoppable runs, and then almost lost when a lemon shark lit up by the vibrations of the permit homes in. Simon pounds on the water with his pushpole and the shark disappears.

Mo, standing braced and bowlegged on the bow, turns and smiles grimly, his forehead popping with sweat.

Tiring finally, the permit begins to circle the boat, each revolution drawing it nearer. Several times it comes to the surface, then vibrates down, flashing like a coin sinking to the bottom of a wishing well. Fishing the camera out of my gear bag, I am torn between feeling quite wonderful for my oldest friend and feeling insanely, unforgivably jealous.

"How about that," I manage when Simon's hand shoots down into the water, then lifts with the permit gripped by the wrist of its tail.

"Smile," I say, as if there is a need.

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The photograph I took that day is fading now, and in the years since I snapped it, the face of Key West has changed with the influx of money. Fewer people come here for their last drink now, more for the first of many. The 2 A.M. shadows are no longer populated by the hopeless, and you don't see as many paw prints of six-toed cats. Today, you are more likely to encounter iguanas on your bicycle ride to the docks than feral roosters.

But the shoals surrounding the island are there, if ever changing, and the stools we sat on in the Half Shell Raw Bar, where Mo pulled the photograph out of his shirt pocket and stared at it for about the 20th time that night, are still being warmed by those who are drawn to the end of the road. We'd had the film roll developed at the one-hour lab, and the best photo showed the slab-sided, nearly circular fish imprinted against Mo's chest. No one he'd shown the picture to knew what kind of fish it was or seemed to care.

The Key West they came to find was pretty much reflected in its entirety by the bottles behind the bar.

"Are you going to kiss it again?" I asked.

Mo put the picture back into his pocket. "This is on me," he said, and scattered bills onto the bar.

Back at the hotel, I walked out onto the dock. A few blocks away, tourists were watching the sunset behind Mallory Square, clutching margaritas, throwing money to the talking parrots. At the end of the dock, a man leaned on the wooden rail. He tapped ash from his cigarette and considered the ocean below him.

It occurred to me then, as it does now, that in no other place I have fished has fishing been so far beside the point. But then fishermen are by nature set apart, and my end of the road is beyond the bars on Duval, beyond the glow of the cigarette on the dock. It is out there under the stain of the sunset, maybe close, maybe far, still swimming through the darkness. A part of me wishes I had caught it that day, and a part of me hopes I never will.



## MY CRAZY AND SANE FRIEND

By Bill Heavey

**X** Paula Smith is not prone to revealing secrets. She won't tell you where the big bucks she keeps tabs on hang out. Those are her bucks, and she wants to be the one to find their sheds, which also belong to her.

Yet every so often, Paula will offer up a gift. She'll tell you where to go if you want some of the last of the wineberries. And she finds her own foolishness as amusing as anyone else's. Once she told me about the time she tried to kill a deer with a knife by jumping down on it from a tree limb. "Seemed like that doe had been gone for five seconds before I hit the ground! I fell right on my ass!"

Paula is anything but lazy. When parts of "her" territory were overrun with Canada geese a few years ago, she would occasionally grab one, wring its neck, stuff it in her backpack, and take it home on the bus. But that didn't go so smoothly one day. "About the time we got to Georgetown, I hear aw-uk, aw-uk coming from my pack. The goose ain't dead. People are trying to figure out what this sound is. So I

did my crazy-lady act to buy some time." Her eyes get wide. Her neck goes limp. She swings her head to and fro, moaning some unhinged stream-of-consciousness about the Gravy Man chasing her. It's so good it freaks me out.

"That only works for a little while, so I got off the bus in Georgetown and finished choking that goose in an alley. Then I got on the next bus. Me and Gordon ate every bit of meat on that bird."

I tell her that Canadas are federally protected, and taking one can get you a fine of up to \$10,000. Paula knows this. "But we're overrun with geese. You can say, 'Well, if everybody did that, it'd be terrible.' And it would. But how many yuppies are gonna strangle a goose?"

I don't condone such lawbreaking. But I am proud to count Paula Smith as my friend.

*Bill Heavey's latest book, It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It, will be released in May by Grove/Atlantic (groveatlantic.com).*



## BY C.J. CHIVERS

**C**hris Ott knew the enraged grizzly was coming back to finish killing him. Knocked flat, half-scalped, blinded by his own blood rushing over his brow and down his face, he sifted facts from surprise. Seconds before, the big sow had exploded from undergrowth and hit him, slashing open his head and biting his face and neck as she forced him down. He had spotted her only seconds before she landed on him and her slobbering maw smacked his, transforming him from a fit 42-year-old man to wounded prey in the predator's grip. Now he was experiencing what sometimes happens to people as they die. It was mid-attack. Time seemed to slow. The momentum of the bear's lunge had carried her past. This was his stay—the time a grizzly requires to stop, spin, and pounce back on broken prey. It stood to be the rest of Chris's life.

He could hear the bear crashing across the few yards of thicket that separated them, her hot mouth reddened with his blood. He had time for a single word: "Bruce!"

\*\*\*

The day in mid October had been set aside for the work that accompanies the end of a hunt. A two-week trek in northeastern British Columbia had run its course. Chris had taken an impressive stone sheep the day before, capping a 2007 season that had been carefully planned and well lived. He and his guide, Bruce Willis, had found a concentration of big rams in July, and had returned in fall to find the sheep down from the mountains to graze on willows, fattening up ahead of winter. Chris had never seen rams so low.

The previous morning, he and Bruce had left camp early, leaving behind their wrangler, Nick France. They walked about a mile and set up in a creek basin, to glass a hill overlooking the feeding grounds. There they spotted a fine ram, bedded down. When the animal rose, Bruce had already propped up a thick

branch as a rest. Chris dropped the ram with a kneeling 250-yard shot from his .270 Weatherby Magnum. They dressed the animal and packed it back to the tents, where they agreed to load the nine horses in the morning for the walk out, which would take a full day.

Hunts can be hard to end. With this one a success, Nick asked for a few hours for himself in the morning while the other men broke the camp. He wanted to take a mountain goat. Chris lent Nick his rifle, and Nick walked out at dawn. Chris and Bruce would monitor the two-way radio and be ready to help. About two hours later, they heard gunshots. They stopped packing and headed for the creek bed to look up to where Nick had set up.

Their camp was in thick brush, crisscrossed with fallen logs. Even their short walk was slow going. Chris's peripheral vision picked up movement to his left. The movement assumed a shape: a grizzly cub, man-size, perhaps 3 years old and maybe 20 yards out.

"Bear!" Chris said. "Bruce, it's a bear!"

Neither man had a rifle; they were so close to camp that they had not thought they would need to defend themselves. Bruce reached down and picked up a large fallen branch. He began to wave it, projecting size and confidence. As Chris stepped backward, his feet caught on a downed log. He tripped, landing hard on his back. He had had run-ins with grizzlies before. He knew that body language signaling fear or vulnerability could trip a predator's switch. Falling down left him in about the worst position to be in. He had to get up.

It was too late. Scrambling for footing, Chris heard something heavy crashing through the thicket. He spun instinctively and faced the noise on one knee, looking directly at a charging grizzly. It was the mother bear. She was closing the distance without a snarl or roar, focused, intent to kill. Chris flinched and she was on him, hitting his head like a sprinting Labrador retriever comes down on a tennis ball. Her mouth closed on his face. Her claws raked the scalp beneath his hair. He smelled her putrid breath as their noses met. As she snapped her mouth closed, Chris's jaw shattered within hers, breaking like a coffee cup.

Then it ended. Somehow, she was past him.

In the inexplicable ways of violence, the bear had hit Chris almost as exactly as she needed to for an instant kill. And yet Chris was alive. Her teeth had closed on his face and neck but missed his carotid artery. The heavy swing of her mitt had not struck him squarely enough to break his spine or knock him out. And even as she had landed, the speed of her pounce had caused her to overshoot slightly. Whether this was fortuitous or cruel was a matter of perspective. It meant that Chris—sprawled on the cold ground, sightless, blood rushing out—would be both helpless and alert for the follow-up attack. He was a blunt and sometimes hard-edged investor who had conditioned hard so he could push deep into high-elevation wilderness. He ordinarily trusted his preparations and the methodical workings of his mind. He was outmatched.

As time slowed, he tried to decide what to do. Fight? Impossible. Flight? Not without eyes, and not this far into the attack. He saw one choice: Play dead, and hope the sow would lose interest.

"Bruce!" he shouted, as he covered up.

He heard a reply: "I'm coming!"

Chris rolled to his stomach, clasped his hands against the back of his neck, and locked his elbows together by his blood-soaked chin. He was offering his shoulders and arms to the bear, while protecting his neck. How long could he hold out if she began to shred?

The grizzly landed again, dropping her head like an anvil. This time she chose his back, biting through his canvas coat and wool shirt. He felt her canines sink into his meat.


With furious speed and in silence, she released him, then bit him again. Then a third time. Chris understood that she was trying to gut him, or to rip open his lungs. He heard a rifle shot. The bear released him, looked up—and froze. As quickly as he had been on him, she was off of him. Chris heard her rushing away. She was charging the camp.

There was a second shot, followed by silence. Chris remained belly down, feigning death. *Was she eating Bruce now?*

\*\*\*

Bruce appeared in the thicket. Moving fast, he had made it to camp, retrieved his rifle, and fired a warning shot. This had prompted the bear to charge him. His second shot hit her neck and shoulder, breaking load-bearing bones. She collapsed among the terrified, tied-up horses. There she died.

It had all lasted only a minute or so, and stopped as quickly as it had begun. One more bite and Chris might have been dead—his head crushed, his spine snapped, his insides exposed. Instead, he was alive, though per-

A full-page photograph of a man in hunting attire. He is wearing a dark jacket, a cap, and has binoculars around his neck. He holds a rifle in his right hand. The background shows a rugged, mountainous landscape under a cloudy sky. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

*Teeth Marks* Scars on the left side of his face and neck show where the bear mauled Ott.

haps not for long. He sat up, felt wind rushing across his teeth through his exposed cheek. He reached for his face, part of which hung loosely, and moved it back into place. His hand filled with blood. Two cubs were bawling somewhere nearby, in the woods. They did not sound like a threat. Chris had no time for them. He was taking stock. He did not know how badly his back was wounded. But he had full mobility and motor skills. His airway was open. He was breathing clearly.

He began channeling thoughts. The bear was dead. His life now depended on him. *If I panic, I die. If I let my heart rate climb, I pump out all of my blood.*

His heart was pounding. Control. He needed self-control.

*I have a family. I have two sons. I'm going to go home. I have to figure out how. Stay calm.*

Pain crashed over Chris like a wave. As endorphins wore off, his body informed him of the damage. He felt intense burning in his back and across his head. He was being seared. He stood and staggered to camp, where Bruce gave him horse blankets to lie on. Chris knew he needed to stop the bleeding on his head. He asked for bandages. As he pressed the gauze to himself, he also knew he needed medical help but could not ride out on horseback to get it. There was no time.

He always traveled the wilderness with a satellite phone. He asked Bruce to retrieve it and get a helicopter moving. The weather was not bad. There was light. They could bring in an aircraft and take him out. Huddling for warmth, he realized that his bleeding was slowing. This fact provided information: The bear must not have opened an artery or torn a vital organ. Chris understood that he had a chance.

Nick, who had walked back to camp, was indignant as he arrived. No one had been answering radio calls. He saw the huge bear carcass, about 350 pounds, sprawled dead inside the camp. He saw Chris. It was perhaps 35 degrees. Nick quickly covered Chris up with more blankets, examined him, and changed the dressing on his mangled face.

The helicopter arrived in early afternoon and soon lifted the mangled man away. Chris Ott had a long recovery ahead, with extensive suturing, courses of intravenous antibiotics, and rounds of facial reconstruction. With time he would be fitted with a replacement titanium jaw. He knew nothing of this yet. But the aircraft was climbing and gathering speed. The wilderness was growing small beneath him. He was moving toward a hospital. From the mouth of a grizzly, with seconds to live, he had emerged. His life's duration and its prospects would not be determined by a grizzly's next bite. Chris Ott was alive, and headed home.



## MY LEAP OF FAITH

By Steven Rinella

**✗ Sometimes it's difficult to** anticipate sources of danger when you're hunting in the backcountry. But on this sunny day, while hunting Coes deer in eastern Arizona, we never had any doubt that rattlesnakes were the things to be watching for.

I was hunting with the crew that films my TV show, *Meat Eater*. The last few days had been cold and wet. Now that it was warming up, our cameraman, Mo Fallon, commented that every rattlesnake in the neighborhood would be coming out of the ground. He also mentioned that this area was known for green Mojave rattlesnakes, a breed whose venom includes a rare neurotoxin that can make their bites 10 times more dangerous than typical rattlers. Because I was walking in the lead, I figured it was my responsibility to be extra vigilant. But I was distracted from my duties by the fact that we were traveling across fresh terrain, where I was more interested in looking for deer than reptiles.

When I did hear the snickering sound of a rattlesnake, I couldn't tell where it was

coming from. I froze and flashed my hand up in a warning to Mo, who stopped without knowing what was going on. I scanned a 10-foot radius around my body but couldn't see anything. Then, suddenly, I noticed the coiled body and rattle of a 4-foot green Mojave switching agitatedly between my feet. The business end of the snake emerged from the outside of my left boot. Its middle portion was pinned firmly beneath my weight, but there was still enough exposed neck for the snake to be coiled into a striking pose with a fine set of displayed fangs.

I stammered to Mo, getting out some sequence of the words "Snake...boot...rock!" Somehow he understood what I was trying to say, and he grabbed up a fist-size boulder. "On three," I said.

As soon as the rock left his hand, I jumped. My leap was far, and Mo's aim was true. Later, after the snake had simmered, its flesh was chewable but stringy. No matter how much I seasoned it, the meat couldn't erase the metallic aftertaste that forms in your mouth after a close call.



**THE JANKOWSKI FILE**  
**Age:** 55  
**Hometown:** Batavia NY  
**Credentials:** Police Lieutenant,  
Firearms Instructor,  
Trained with Buffalo FBI, NY State Dept  
of Homeland Security,  
Commander of SWAT unit (18 officers),  
Master Shooter

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My eye doctor confirmed that my eyes had changed. I ordered a new prescription for my shooting glasses, but when I resumed my training, I was still only seeing at about 85 percent.

Right about that time, I saw fellow law enforcement officer and competitive shooter Robert Vogel featured in a gun magazine, endorsing Claroxan. I was intrigued. Out

of ideas, I placed my first order that day.

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my front sight clearly as I engaged them.

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## BY DAVE HURTEAU

**T**he day my grandfather died he said he was going fishing, but he only made it as far as the bathroom. It was the best he could do.

I was supposed to go out with him. "C'mon, Friend!"

That's what he called me. Like this: "Friend! Get me a beer!" and "Friend! Come hill my potatoes!" He also called me "No Friend." Like

this: "No Friend! What's a matter with you? You got a screw loose?"

Anyway, I knew he wouldn't make it. But I suspected he wanted once more to drive his putt-putting red Omni to the Dyke Road—a gravel lane where he'd lately been pulling to a stop in the middle of the road above the culvert, opening the car door, and casting from the driver's seat into the pool below.

It was, like I said, the best he could do.

A few years earlier, before his legs would no longer carry him to the stream bank; before the hit-and-run incident in which he gunned the big Chrysler he drove then out of his driveway in reverse, creamed my brother's parked new car, shifted into drive and went fishing; before it was decided that he could no longer be trusted with a car that topped 40 mph, I did fish with him one last time.

\*\*\*

It was a summer evening with the windows down and the smell of hayfields whipping my face and Grandpa pressing the pedal of his road-hogging New Yorker to the floor. That big, blue boat just sailed, like nothing, up Route 122—hitting 60...70...80 mph to the top of the hill. Then *click*. He dropped her into neutral and we coasted all the way to the Baker Road, parked, and grabbed our rods.

Through the lush alfalfa we walked single file toward the stream, me a few steps behind out of deference. Grandpa let loose. *Toot. Toot. Toot. Toot.* "There!" he said,

like he'd made some inarguable point.

We got to his spot under the big willow: a deep, jade pool with tag alders leaning in, shading the cut banks. He settled in and barked, "Friend! Go try that riffle downstream. I've caught a lot of fish in that riffle."

He had never caught a fish in that riffle. No one ever had. Not me nor any of my four brothers before me. The truth is that this was always less about teaching us kids to fish or having someone to fish with than it was about outfishing us and having someone to outfish. But he took us, and we learned. I scrambled a half mile downstream and worked my way up, catching trout the whole way, reaching Grandpa's spot at dusk.

I sat on the cool bank next to him—he in his lawn chair, his rod on a forked stick. He used a Zebco close-faced combo, 17-pound-test, a couple of split shot, and a nightcrawler threaded onto a "s--t'n Japanese" hook.

Whenever he lost a fish, he always blamed his "s--t'n Japanese" hooks, but he was too cheap to buy anything else.

"Well, Friend?" he said.

I showed him the 15-inch brown I'd kept and told him about the other dozen or more smaller ones. For years, my brothers and I had been telling him about all the fish we'd caught and threw back. "Baahh!" he'd always say. They didn't count. They might as well have been pretend fish, or maybe lies. He inspected my 15-incher and grunted.

Suddenly his rod was bouncing and waving. He grabbed it and reared back like he was snagged on a tire. I always wondered how many of the poor trout in Grandpa's pool had been yanked lipless. But this time he was hooked fast. There was a heavy splash in the darkness. Grandpa lunged forward, cranking

**"I ALWAYS WONDERED HOW MANY OF THE POOR TROUT IN GRANDPA'S POOL HAD BEEN YANKED LIPLESS."**

the Zebco, which complained loudly. There was a moment when it wasn't clear who would win the fight, and then the fish flopped onto the bank and popped free.

"S--t'n Japanese hooks!" Grandpa yelled, as he took a swipe with his boot and miraculously connected, kicking the trout farther up the bank. I dove into the bracken ferns, feeling for the big brown in the dark, and finally held it up in the beam of Grandpa's flashlight. It was a good one. All of 15 inches, probably 16.

\*\*\*

Grandpa floored the big Chrysler and up the hill we sailed, bobbing smoothly home. He reached under his seat and came up with a white card printed with block letters: BEER. As we topped the hill, the needle touched 80, and he dropped her into neutral again just as the cop's lights swirled in the rearview.

"Sir, do you know why I pulled you over?"

"Don't you 'sir' me," Grandpa answered, feeling good. "I know your father!"

"Mr. Hurteau, you can't drink and drive."

"Why not? It's my car. It's my beer!"

"Mr. Hurteau—"

"Look at this 17-incher I caught tonight."

The cop let him off, and Grandpa gunned it, though only to 60 this time, and we coasted again down Route 122, right through the stoplight and into the corner gas station.

"How'd you do tonight, Mr. Hurteau?" the attendant asked.

"Caught an 18-incher!"

"You always get the big ones."

"Give me a dollar of unleaded, John."

Grandpa said—just enough to get him to the top of the hill twice tomorrow night. He'd be back to lie to John about his next catch.

"Yup, a good night," Grandpa said, then turned and looked at me. "And, ah...my grandson here caught a big one, too."

"Yeah, how big?" asked John.

I knew how fast Grandpa's fish could grow. But never my fish. If anything, mine shrink.

"Oh..." He seemed to think about it.

"Probably 15...maybe 15 and a half."

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# FIELD TEST

## KEEPER FINDERS

Four Boy Scouts and 9,500 measuring badges take top GPS units into the wilds to test for ease of use, reliability, and overall functionality. **By Stacey L. White**



With supersensitive receivers, sophisticated base maps, digital cameras, MP3 players, and more, today's top GPS units are so technologically advanced that we had to find some young people—who understand these things—to test them properly. So we gave four top-line models to four members of Boy Scout Troop 33, based in Danbury, Conn., who used them in the wilds last summer to help earn their orienteering merit badges.



★★★★

**DELORME EARTHMATE PN-60**  
\$300; DELORME.COM

**The Lowdown** The DeLorme and Garmin received the same score, for different reasons. Testers loved the Earthmate's ergonomic shape and button controls, which Hinh said were "easy to use and very straightforward." Ames raved about how quickly the unit acquired a signal. "It's fast, fast, fast!" he said. "It would find a signal before some of the others had finished initializing." Cruz-Zeno expressed concern about the "smallish screen" but liked that the view rotates automatically depending on the unit's position. Bueti, who goes on three-day backpacking trips, said the unit's low power draw meant he always had plenty of juice. The included software lets you create customized maps using aerial imagery, street detail, nautical charts, and topo maps.

**Hits** "Least expensive, but highest quality." —Bueti

**Misses** "Could use a better lanyard mount." —Ames



★★★★

**GARMIN OREGON 550T**  
\$500; GARMIN.COM

**The Lowdown** The fact that the Garmin could be set up right out of the box without even reading the instructions greatly appealed to our test panel. "I could go out and start using this GPS right away," Bueti said. Three of the four testers liked the unit's touch-screen controls, which they found to be "intuitive" to use, although hard to see at times in bright sunlight. Hinh praised the unit's "enlarged icons" and said that "navigating from one page to another is fairly easy." The one downside that testers noted was that it would be difficult to use the touch screen while wearing thick gloves. All four Scouts liked the 550T's preloaded topo maps and said it was easy to upload additional maps via the SD card slot.

**Hits** "The integrated camera." —Cruz-Zeno

**Misses** "Not a fan of the touch screen." —Ames



★★★★

**LOWRANCE INOURA SAFARI**  
\$300; LOWRANCE.COM

**The Lowdown** It got high points for durability, but the testers split on the Lowrance's overall effectiveness. Their chief concern was how long it took to acquire a signal. Ease of use was another issue. "Initial setup was a bit of a hassle," said Hinh, who also noted that the battery clip "popped out and was hard to reinstall." Ames compared the unit to an old computer. "It would do things, but it took quite a while." Cruz-Zeno said "operation became easier with time and use." Bueti agreed that it took a long time to find a signal but said the unit was easy to use while wearing gloves. Hinh praised the design of the screen, saying it was "easy to use and has buttons and touch-screen options." The preloaded map shows roads, topographic contours, and key points of interest, and the unit includes a trail-cam picture viewer.

**Hits** "The built-in MP3 player." —Bueti

**Misses** "Need to carry extra batteries." —Cruz-Zeno



★★★★

**MAGELLAN EXPLORIST 710T**  
\$500; MAGELLANGPS.COM

**The Lowdown** Three testers rated the Magellan highly. They liked that the screen could be easily seen in all kinds of light and noted the unit's durability. Cruz-Zeno dropped his twice and left it outside overnight (where it got wet) and yet experienced no performance issues. Bueti said, "It's made to withstand extreme conditions." The 710T, which features topographic and street navigation maps, was Ames's favorite, even though it could be a bit slow while tracking a route. He loved the unit's ability to sync pictures and video from the built-in camera to access locations on any route. But Hinh had a problem and scored accordingly. When he opened the battery compartment to install batteries, clips and springs fell out, and he couldn't fully test the unit.

**Hits** "Great features, good controls." —Cruz-Zeno

**Misses** "Battery life was less than claimed." —Ames



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NICK BUETI, AGE 13

- Home Backpacking Area: Connecticut
- Days Backpacked/Camped Per Year: 30



EDWIN FERNANDO CRUZ-ZENO, AGE 16

- Home Backpacking Area: Connecticut
- Days Backpacked/Camped Per Year: 30



JONAN HINH, AGE 14

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**\$28999** REG. PRICE \$449.99

**LIMIT 4** - One (4) per store or website or by phone. Cannot be used with other discounts or coupons on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 5/15/13. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

68528/69674

**30" 11 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET US & GENERAL**

INCLUDES:

- 6 Drawer Top Chest
- 2 Drawer Middle Section
- 3 Drawer Roller Cabinet

Item 67421 shown

**SAVE \$150**

**\$14999** REG. PRICE \$299.99

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67421/69674

**MIG-FLUX WELDING CART**

Welder and accessories sold separately

Item 69340 shown

**SAVE 41%**

**\$3499** REG. PRICE \$59.99

**LIMIT 4** - One (4) per store or website or by phone. Cannot be used with other discounts or coupons on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 5/15/13. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

69340/69674

**2.5 HP, 21 GALLON, 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR**

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

Item 67847 shown

**SAVE \$70**

**\$14999** REG. PRICE \$219.99

**LIMIT 4** - One (4) per store or website or by phone. Cannot be used with other discounts or coupons on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 5/15/13. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

67847/69674

**1/2" INDUSTRIAL QUALITY SUPER HIGH TORQUE IMPACT WRENCH**

700 FT. LBS. MAX. TORQUE

Item 68424 shown

**SAVE \$50**

**\$6999** REG. PRICE \$119.99

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68424/2623

**Super Coupon!**

**Gardner 3-1/2" NINE LED FLASHLIGHTS**  
**PACK OF 2**

LOT NO. 97038/  
 69065/69112



Each flashlight requires three AAA batteries (three included).

**SAVE 80%**

Item 97038 shown

**\$199**

REG. PRICE \$9.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**PORTABLE FISH FINDER**  
 LOT NO. 96511



Requires four AA batteries (sold separately).

**SAVE 30%**

Item 96511 shown

**\$3499**

REG. PRICE \$49.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**MAGNETIC TRAILER ALIGNMENT KIT**  
 LOT NO. 95664/99770



**SAVE 60%**

Item 95664 shown

**\$799**

REG. PRICE \$19.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**10" SLIDING COMPOUND MITER SAW**  
 LOT NO. 98199



**SAVE \$70**

Item 98199 shown

**\$7999**

REG. PRICE \$149.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**18 PIECE T-HANDLE BALL POINT AND HEX KEY WRENCH SET**  
**PITTSBURGH**  
 LOT NO. 96645



**SAVE 33%**

Item 96645 shown

**\$1199**

REG. PRICE \$17.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**8" HUNTING/SURVIVAL KNIFE**



**SAVE 41%**

LOT NO. 90714

**\$699**

REG. PRICE \$11.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**4 PIECE 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWN SET**  
 LOT NO. 90964/00405



**SAVE 52%**

Item 00984 shown

**\$799**

REG. PRICE \$16.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**9000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE**  
 LOT NO. 68143



**SAVE \$120**

Item 68143 shown

**\$27999**

REG. PRICE \$39.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**12 PIECE CUSHION GRIP SCREWDRIVER SET**  
**PITTSBURGH**  
 LOT NO. 80866/99421



**SAVE 58%**

Item 80868 shown

**\$499**

REG. PRICE \$11.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**500 LB. CAPACITY ALUMINUM CARGO CARRIER**  
**HaulMaster**  
 LOT NO. 92655/68656/60771



**SAVE \$60**

Item 90555 shown

**\$6999**

REG. PRICE \$129.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**HaulMaster 1500 LB. CAPACITY DUAL WHEEL SWING-BACK BOAT TRAILER JACK**  
 LOT NO. 67500/69779



**SAVE 37%**

Item 67500 shown

**\$2499**

REG. PRICE \$39.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**12" RATCHET BAR CLAMP/SPREADER**  
 LOT NO. 48807/  
 69975/69221/  
 69222



**SAVE 63%**

Item 48807 shown

**\$199**

REG. PRICE \$5.49

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**Super Coupon!**

**MECHANIC'S GLOVES**  
**LARGE**  
 LOT NO. 93640/60447



**SAVE 56%**

Item 93640 shown

**\$349**

REG. PRICE \$7.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**6.5 HP OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINES (212 CC)**  
**PREDATOR**  
 LOT NO. 68129/  
 60363/69730



**SAVE \$80**

Item 68120 shown

**\$9999**

REG. PRICE \$179.99

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**Super Coupon!**

**RECIPROCATING SAW WITH ROTATING HANDLE**  
**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**  
 LOT NO. 65570



**SAVE 50%**

Item 65570 shown

**\$1999**

REG. PRICE \$39.99

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Shown in  
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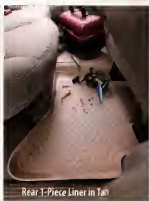
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"I have used Husky Liners since they came on the market. They fit better, last longer, and look better than the others I have tried in my multiple 4x4s." -Gonnie H. (Escondido, CA)



Front Passenger  
Liner in Tan



Rear 1-Piece Liner in Tan

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A black and white photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a denim jacket. He is looking off to the side while holding a lit cigarette in his mouth. In his other hand, he holds a pack of blu eCigs. The pack is dark with the 'blu' logo in white. The background is dark and out of focus.

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A pack of blu eCigs, shown vertically. The pack is dark with the 'blu' logo in white. A small blue light is visible at the top of the pack.

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# A REGULAR JOE

You might not guess there's anything unusual about this guy **By Bill Heavey**

**I** "M REACHING OUT," the e-mail began, "on behalf of prosthetics company Ossur." They were pitching the inspirational story of an employee, a hunter who had lost a leg to cancer. His prosthetic leg wasn't waterproof, so Joe Reynolds had had to watch from a canoe as his buddies set decoys or waded after downed birds. So Ossur had fabricated him a waterproof one. Today, Joe Reynolds was an "amputee and avid hunter whose goal is to inspire others by showing them how he lives life without limitations."

To me, the feel-good pitch alone was justification for not going. But I went anyway. Just to see what "life without limitations" looks like.

Basically, it looks like a stocky guy with a week's worth of stubble, driving a '97 pickup held together by rust. Joe Reynolds—blue-eyed, with a distinct hitch in his stride—is a self-described hill-billy. But he doesn't carry himself like somebody who thinks of himself as handicapped. At 30, he moves like an athlete irritated and impatient at the injury temporarily slowing him down.

At dinner with Joe and his fiancée, Andrea, I heard his story. He'd been diagnosed at 15. At the time, the loss of football was the toughest part. Then came a succession of surgeries and 18 months of chemo. He remembered the day all his hair went down the drain with the shower water. I asked if he lost friends during all those months in the hospital. He shrugged. "I was more worried about losing my life." His mom drove a school bus. His dad cooked in a tavern in Marshall, Mich. His family was what got him through. His parents had promised him whatever he wanted if he beat the cancer. He wanted a Brownie Gold 12-gauge. He got it, but cancer got his licks in, eventually taking his leg above the knee. He was in a wheelchair at high school graduation, having just gotten a replacement—for the third time—of the steel rod standing in for his missing femur. "There was no way someone was pushing me in a wheelchair," he said. He got up and

walked across the stage to get his diploma. He thinks that's where he broke the rod for the last time before they took the rest of his leg.

He likes being an assembly technician at Ossur. He runs a lawn-care business on the side. On Friday nights, he cooks at the tavern to give his dad a few hours off. It takes him longer to climb a treestand ladder and get around in the marsh. But he will swim, ride a horse, even dance. Stuff just takes longer and takes more out of him. He expects to be tired and sore by the end of tomorrow's hunt, but that won't stop him. "He gets frustrated and mad and then he cools down," Andrea says. "I can't say anything. I'm not in his position."

We met his cousin, John Reynolds, and went duck hunting the next morning on Rice Creek. It wasn't far from the truck, but it was dark and raining, with thick brush and plenty of muskrat holes to fall into. We threw out the dekes and hunkered under bushes along the shore. John called in several groups, and we downed two mallards. Then another friend, Matt Neil, showed up. He had worked the night shift at a nearby casino as a pastry chef. Joe counts John and Matt as brothers, guys who stuck with him during the darkest days. We downed two more ducks. Matt and I looked but never found them. "Current takes 'em," Joe said. "I'd have brought my dog except he's too white." Andrea works as a hairdresser. Joe joked about having the dog dyed brown.

In the afternoon, we moved to a cornfield. It was my first time in a layout blind. I'd forgotten that *waterproof clothing* is just a marketing term. "You guys' asses wet?" I called. "Oh, hell yeah!" Joe said. It became our theme for the hunt. "Your ass still wet?" we'd ask each other periodically. We worked seven or eight groups of geese but none came in. After two hours, Joe whis-



pered that a pair were approaching from behind. I lay still, waiting. I heard Joe shoot. He'd popped up and taken one bird. The other flew off. "Sorry," he said. "I just couldn't stand it anymore."

By the end of legal light we were soaked and chilled to the bone. We collected dekes by truck headlights, glad to be moving again. Joe, carrying a final load, passed through the light. *Guy looks tired*, I thought. It was then that I remembered he was an amputee. Here's the thing: Even now, remembering the scene, I couldn't tell you which leg it was. Maybe that says something about advanced technology. It says a hell of a lot more about a Michigan hillbilly named Joe Reynolds. **TS**



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